



# PRO Wrestling

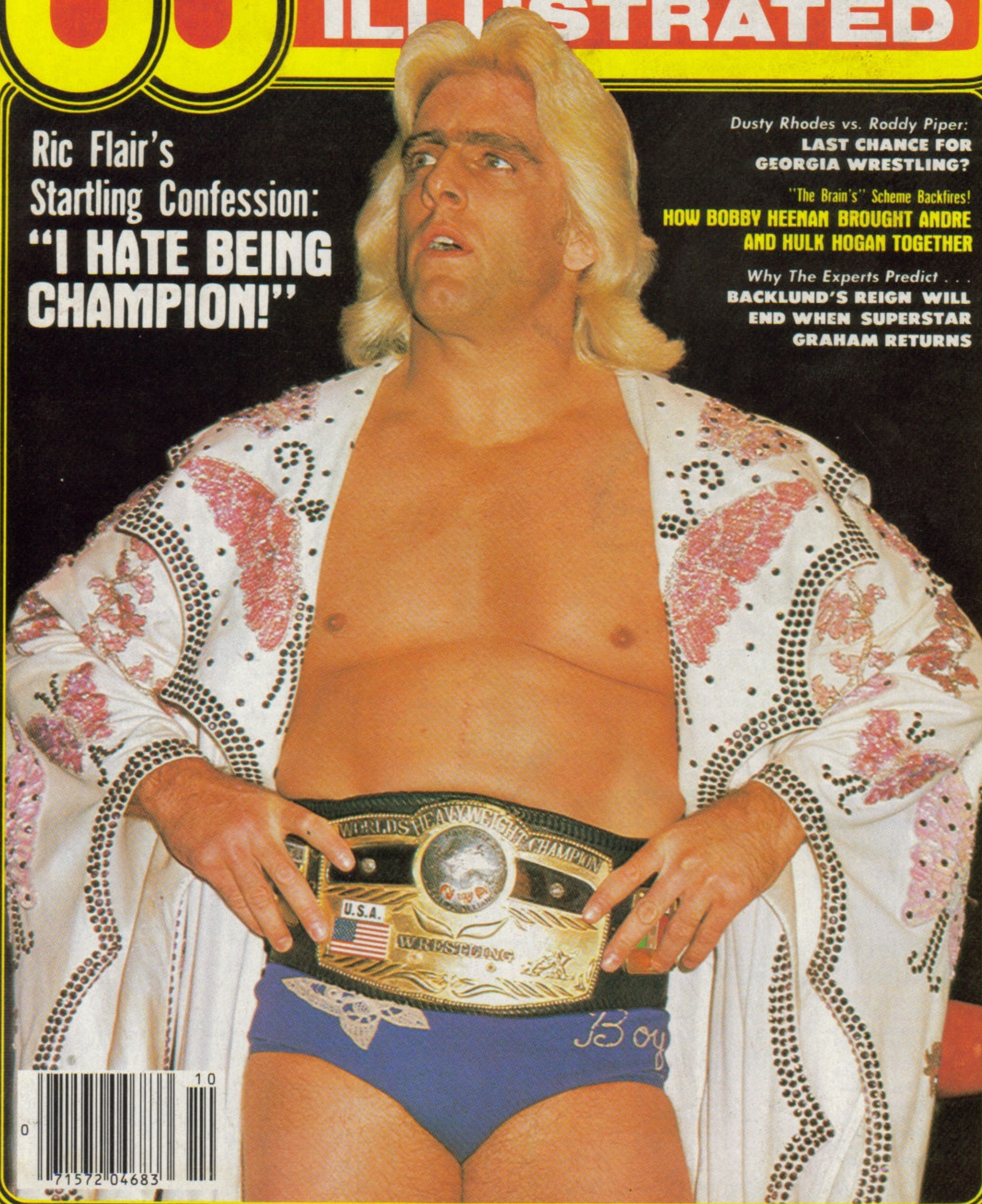
## ILLUSTRATED

Ric Flair's  
Startling Confession:  
**"I HATE BEING  
CHAMPION!"**

Dusty Rhodes vs. Roddy Piper:  
**LAST CHANCE FOR  
GEORGIA WRESTLING?**

"The Brain's" Scheme Backfires!  
**HOW BOBBY HEENAN BROUGHT ANDRE  
AND HULK HOGAN TOGETHER**

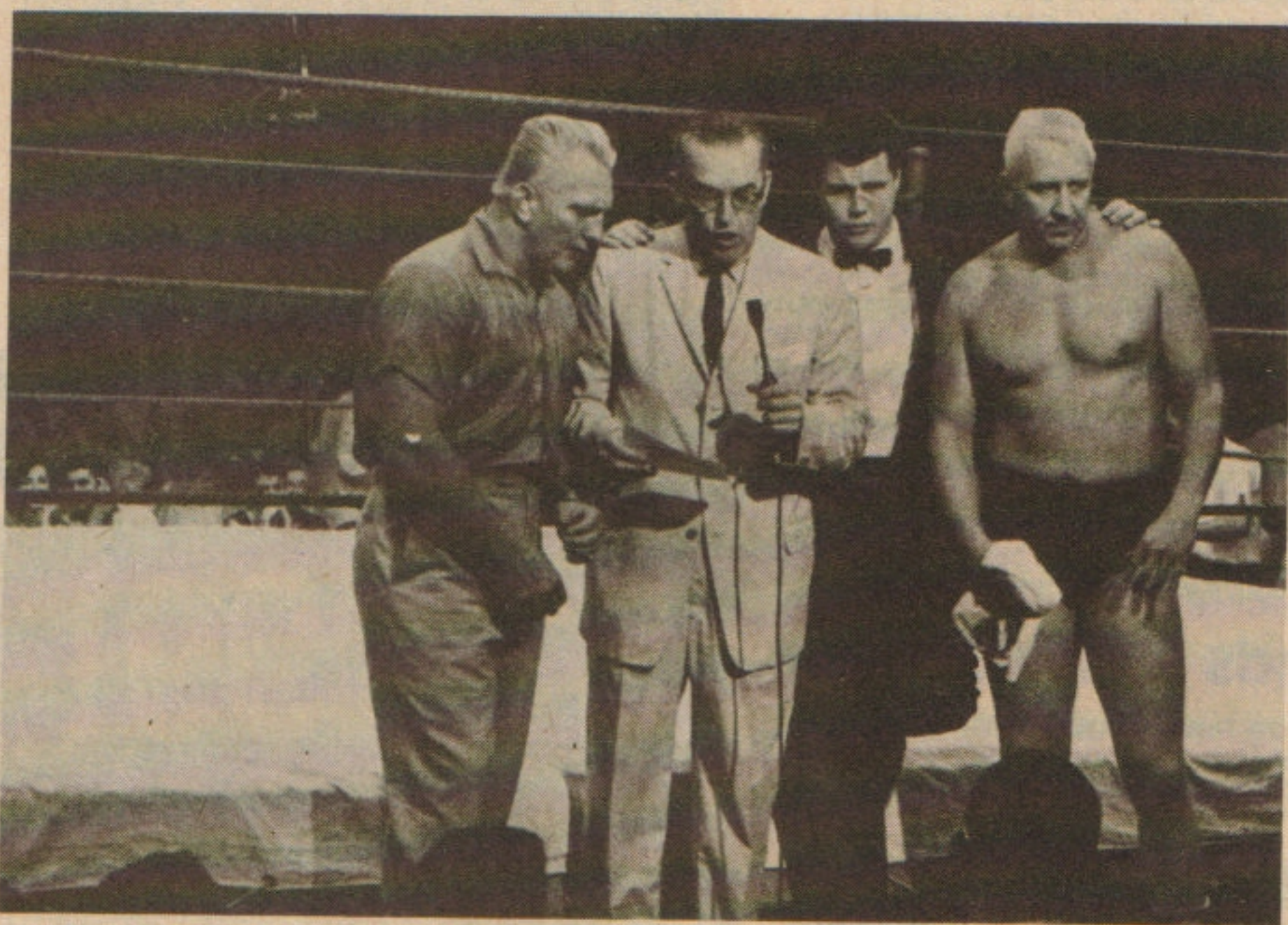
Why The Experts Predict . . .  
**BACKLUND'S REIGN WILL  
END WHEN SUPERSTAR  
GRAHAM RETURNS**





# KING'S COURT

By Peter King



*Bobby Davis (with bow tie) and Bob Orton Sr. listen in as Ray Morgan interviews Buddy Rogers in the early '60s. Davis, who has been inactive as a manager for many years, recognizes the brilliance of Lou Albano.*

**I**HAVE NO doubts that Captain Lou Albano is insane. I also have no doubts that he is a genius.

Too many wrestling fans see only one side of Albano. They see the ranting, raving, and uncontrollable man he is on the interviews. They see a wild-eyed lunatic with earrings in his cheeks and wild black hair leading a savage monster into the ring. What they don't see is the Lou Albano who is considered by many one of the greatest wrestling minds of the 20th century.

At a recent Madison Square Garden show, I sat next to Bobby Davis, a former top wrestling manager. In the early '60s, Davis guided Buddy Rogers to the NWA and WWF titles, a feat never since duplicated. Although Davis has been out of wrestling for more than a decade, he still follows the sport closely. I knew he would be just the man to help me discover the strategy behind Albano's madness.

The third match of the night pitted Mr. Saito, an Albano charge, against Ivan Putski. Quite



*Jimmy Snuka's strategy against WWF champion Bob Backlund was expertly devised by Albano.*

frankly, this seemed to be a bit of an overmatch, and I thought Albano might have made a mistake signing for this match. Bobby Davis disagreed.

"Good move by Lou," Davis said. "Look, Albano has spent most of his time this month working with Snuka, preparing him to wrestle Backlund. Obviously, Lou hasn't been able to work with Saito and Fuji. So instead of risking the tag team belts tonight, he split them up. Good thinking!"

But couldn't he have signed for an easier match? True, Saito held his own against Putski, but he seemed to tire. It appeared to me that Saito did not have his stamina built up for singles matches.

"Yes, that's true," Davis agreed. "But you've gotta understand the rules. Lou really had no choice. When you manage the tag team champs and ask the WWF for permission to split them up on a card, each man must wrestle a contender at least five notches

*(Continued on page 52)*



# RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter



*King James Dillon, infamous manager of Florida rulebreakers, made a surprise visit to the WWF and appeared on a wrestling card in a small arena on Long Island. Why? That's anybody's guess.*

**J**AMES J. DILLON, the Florida manager who handles the careers of Kendo Nagasaki and Florida champion Jim Garvin, wrestled in the WWF for one week last month. The trip was so secret that we did not know about it until Dillon showed up at our executive offices.

"Tonight I am wrestling in a small arena on Long Island," Dillon told me as I tried to find out the purpose of his visit. "My reasons for entering this territory are a secret at this particular time," he added. "But in about one month or so, everyone will know why. The reverberations from my trip

here will shake the world. That is all I can say at this time." We'll keep you posted about what Dillon calls "an earth-shattering announcement."

After 25 years in the sport, Fritz Von Erich has retired. Fritz explained that he wants to devote more time to guiding his sons' careers. His three boys, Kerry, Kevin, and David, are all talented enough to win world titles. Fritz wants to make sure they get the matches that are due them.

"No promoters can take advantage of my boys now," says Fritz. "I'll handle Kerry and Kevin's matchmaking. As for David, I believe I may have to straighten his head out a little bit."

The Moondogs are in Puerto Rico and they're being managed by Bounty Hunter Jim Kent... Hussein Arab is grappling in both Tennessee and Georgia... Killer Khan has split with advisor Lord Al Hays in the Mid-Atlantic region. Khan is now negotiating to wrestle in Louisiana, possibly in Scandor Akbar's stable.

The Grand Wizard has added Playboy Buddy Rose to his list of "uncrowned champions." Rose, who is accompanied to the ring by two long-legged beauties and the Wizard, has a spinebreaker maneuver that has crippled 10 opponents in the Pacific Northwest. "My Playboy or Cowboy Bob Orton will first beat Pedro Morales for the Intercontinental title," Wizard vows. "Then we go after

*(Continued on page 54)*

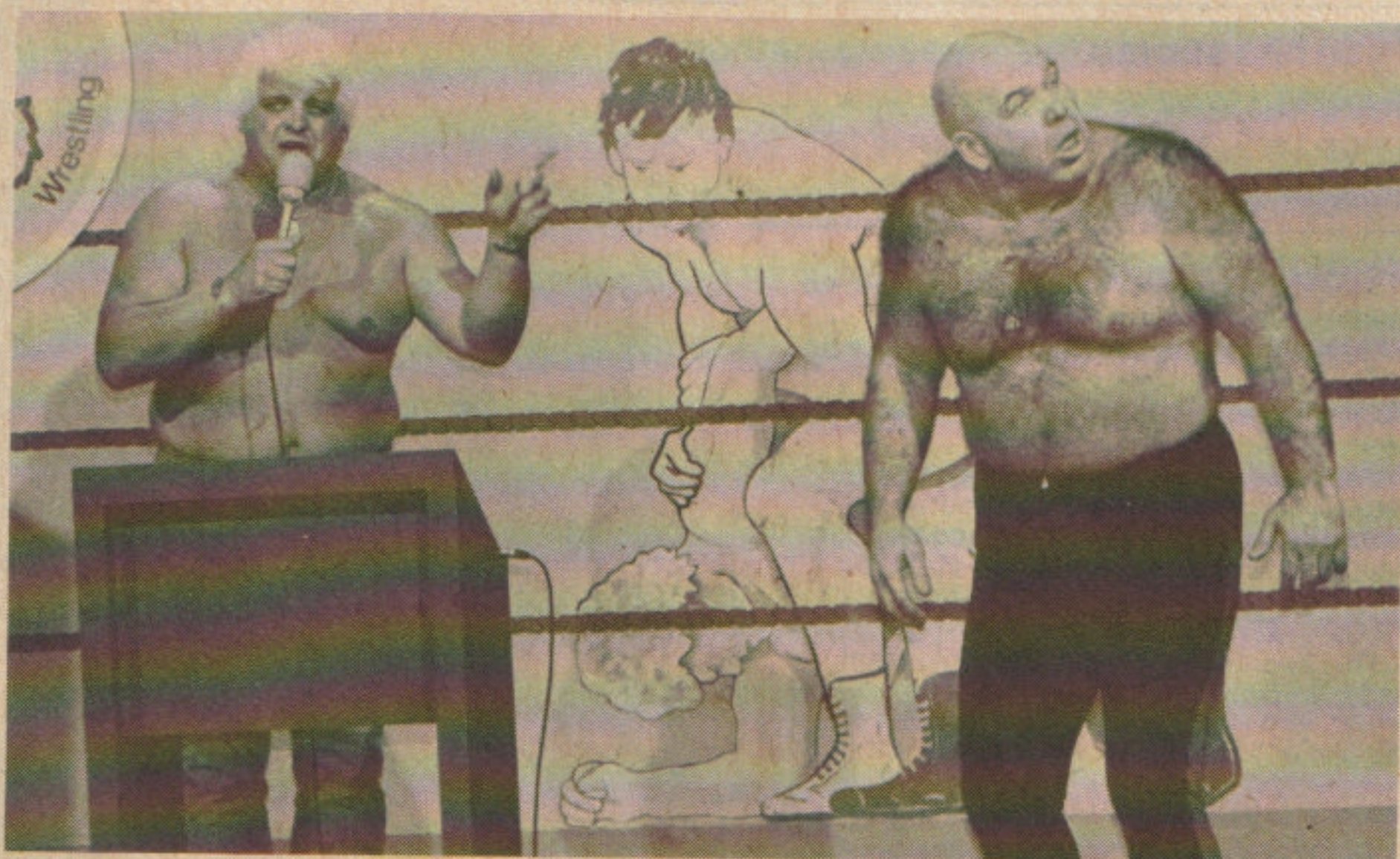


# A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER

**I**T'S BEEN a long time coming. I'm honored to be the first woman columnist for *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. When Steve Farhood and Rich Countis decided to give up the column because their other duties became too time consuming, this column became open. I'm honored that Editor-in-Chief Peter King asked me to fill their place.

I realize this is a great responsibility. Other women who are try-

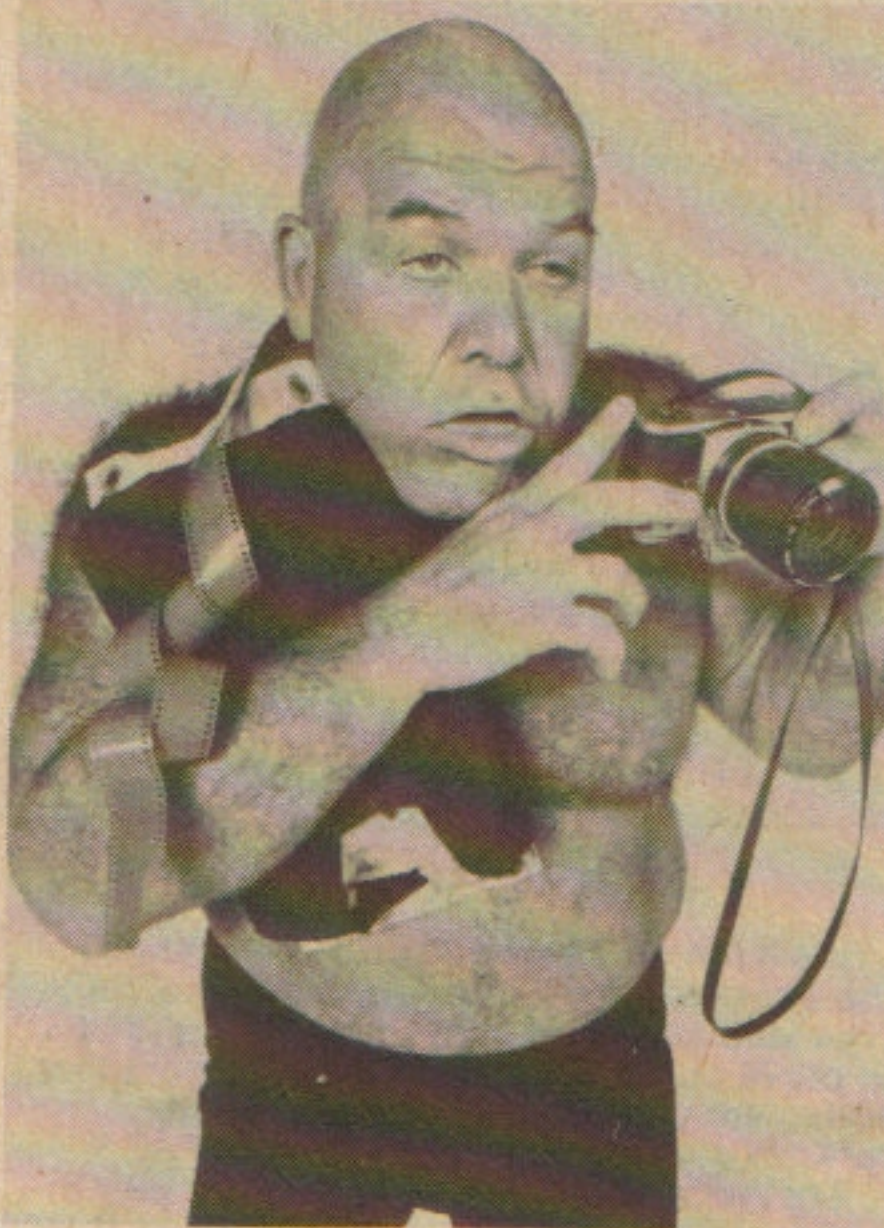


George Steele shocked the wrestling world when he emerged from a cage on "Georgia Championship Wrestling" (left). Unfortunately, Dusty Rhodes was unable to control the madman (above). The institution tried to get Steele interested in photography—with disastrous results (below).



ing to become wrestling reporters—and a lot of us are out there—are looking to me to prove that a woman can handle this job as well as any man. I accept the challenge humbly and gratefully.

First, let me make one thing clear. This is not a woman's column. This is a wrestling column that happens to be written by a



woman. I won't focus on women's concerns or write from what stupid men consider a woman's point of view. I hope that being a woman will give me a different viewpoint from the other reporters, but that should be to

the good. I intend to contribute a needed sense to the dialogue on wrestling.

To make sure that no one would mistake my intentions, I deliberately chose the toughest assignment I could find. Fortunately, there was a beauty waiting for me. George "The Animal" Steele was being released from the institution where he'd been spending some time calming down. It seems Steele had to be put away after his last wrestling stint in Georgia. Steele is regularly put away, because as one of the doctors told me, in layman's terms, "He can only take the outside world for so long before going berserk. I suppose the outside world can only take him for so long before we all need some rest. George can be very trying."

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# WFOOTUS

With CRAIG PETERS

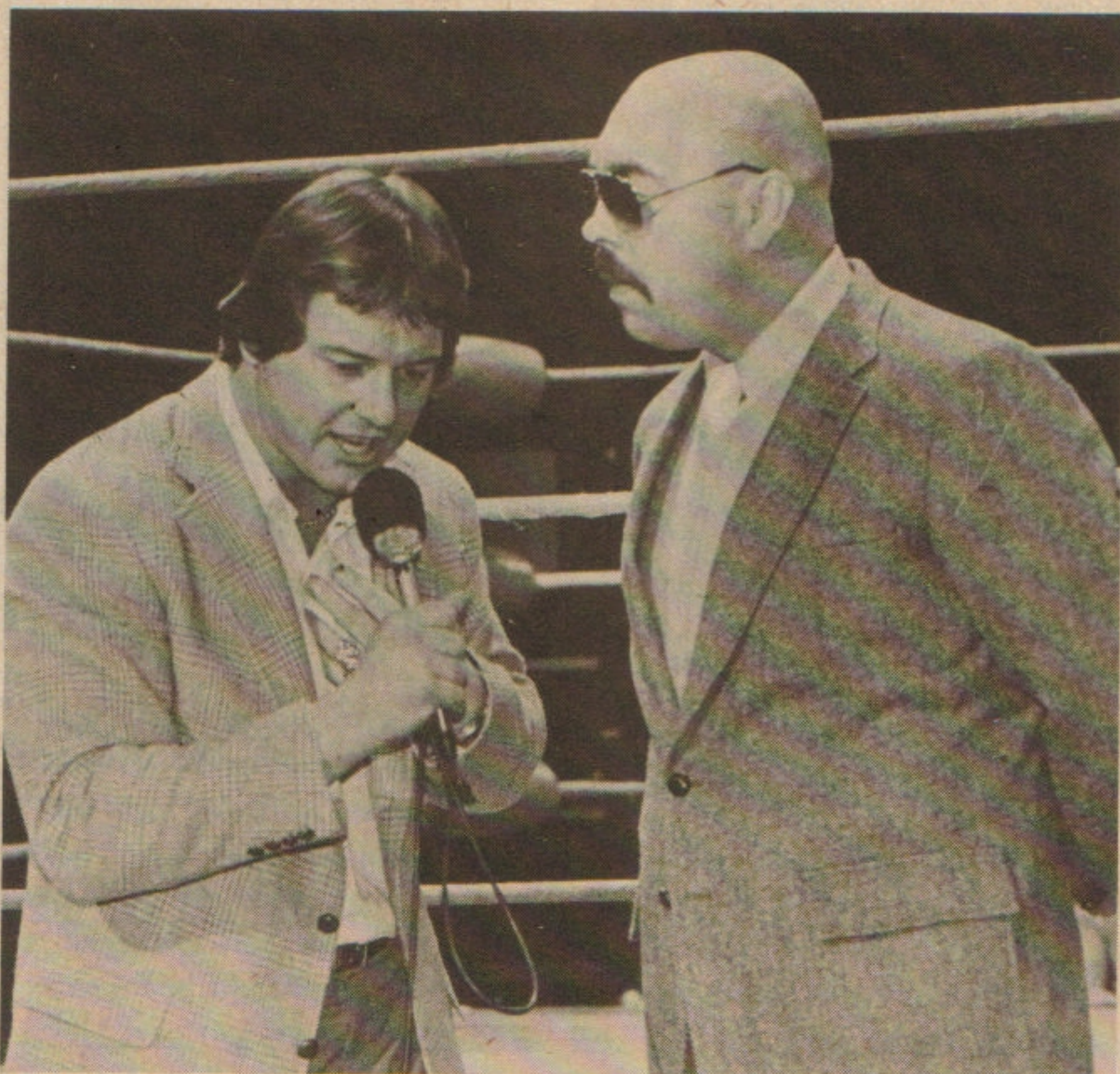
## SOON . . . THE FINAL RESULTS

As mentioned in this space last issue, a ballot is being run in our sister publication, *The Wrestler*, to determine whether Roddy Piper ought to be banned from *Georgia Championship Wrestling* broadcast duties.

In order to keep you informed of the status of the continuing controversy that surrounds

Piper and GCW, it seems that an update on the voting is in order.

As of this writing, votes are running two to one *in favor* of Piper being banned from the program. Final results will be presented in the October issue of *The Wrestler*, on sale August 10.

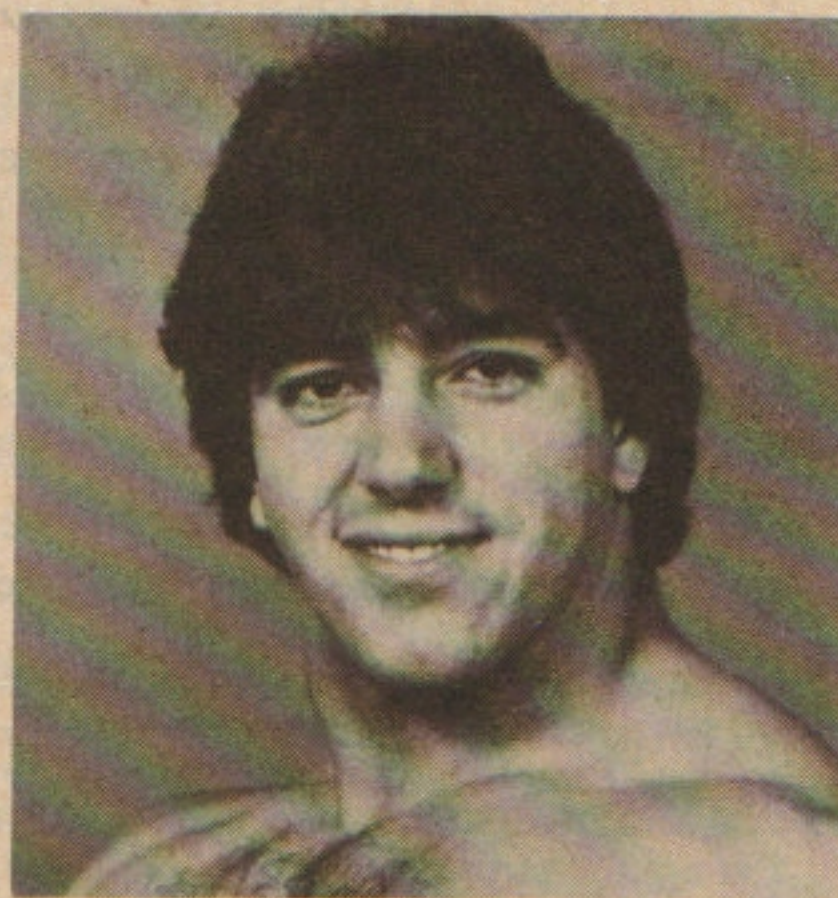


PIPER INTERVIEWS GARY HART

## A NEW HOME, A NEW GOAL

Congratulations are in order for Rick Martel, who has recently entered the AWA and has already taken the area by storm.

Fans in AWA arenas have pledged their support of Martel and, by all appearances, intend to stand by the former WWF star in his bid for the AWA belt.



RICK MARTEL

"I haven't decided whether to spend all my energies in a run for Bockwinkel's title," said Martel recently, "but I haven't ruled out that possibility either."

A match between Martel and Bockwinkel, discounting any involvements by Bobby Heenan, would be one of the classic AWA confrontations of the '80s.

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# DRESSING CONFIDENTIAL ROOM

By Stu Saks

I WOULD SAY that I am, in general, quite healthy. Oh, everybody has his off days, but rarely do I ever feel so badly that I have to stay home an entire day. To the best of my recollection, I've been bedridden three times in the last three years. You want to talk about bad timing?

The first time I was ill I had fourth row seats for the Rolling Stones and an invitation to the press party that followed. The second time I had tickets for the sixth game of last year's World Series. I would have had the pleasure of seeing the Yankees lose and George Steinbrenner burn. My most recent illness was this past June 5, the date of the big Saturday night wrestling extravaganza at Madison Square Garden. Snuka vs. Backlund, Mulligan vs. Andre, Valentine vs. Atlas, Putski vs. Saito, Orton vs. Travis, and an appearance by Fabulous Moolah, but no Stu Saks. He was home with an ailment that he'd rather not have to describe.

My alarm sounded at nine in the morning. I felt so badly, I didn't even get up to turn it off. I just wrapped my pillow around my head and let the alarm beep away. I awoke again at 10:30 and dragged myself out of bed. I knew the day would be a total loss. Regretfully, I called the Garden to give up my ringside press position. A tough,



Gordon Solie and Roddy Piper interview Gary Hart on "Georgia Championship Wrestling," the highest-rated wrestling show, reaching over 1.5 million homes across the nation.

but necessary choice.

I tried to go back to sleep, but couldn't. So I took my pillow and blanket to the living room and turned on the tube. I wouldn't move from that spot for 13 hours. Saturday, June 5th was a veritable television marathon for wrestling fans in New York.

It all began at 11 a.m. with *All-Star Wrestling*, one of the two weekly WWF telecasts. In light of

the Garden show that was to take place in less than 10 hours, this was a particularly interesting broadcast.

At 1:30, I switched to the UHF band for the broadcast of *Lucha Libre* from the Los Angeles Sports Arena. To be honest, most of the wrestlers are unfamiliar to me, and too many try to look like Mil Mascaras. But the competition is

(Continued on page 62)



If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

**TOP ROPE**  
Box 48  
Rockville Centre, N.Y.  
11571

# OFF THE O ROPE

By Dan Shocket

**I**N THE BEST tradition of toadying to the officials, Hulk Hogan has become a good, decent, and noble character. Yet, there are some who feel he hasn't groveled enough for the AWA commissioners. Therefore, I'd like the readers to send in suggestions on how else Hulk Hogan can prove he's basically a wimp. Suggest whose feet he can kiss, how he may best sell his integrity for a few cheers, and where he might best deliver his puerile platitudes on sportsmanship. All suggestions will be sent to Hogan, if we can find somebody who can stoop low enough to deliver it.

And now the mail:

Dear Dan,

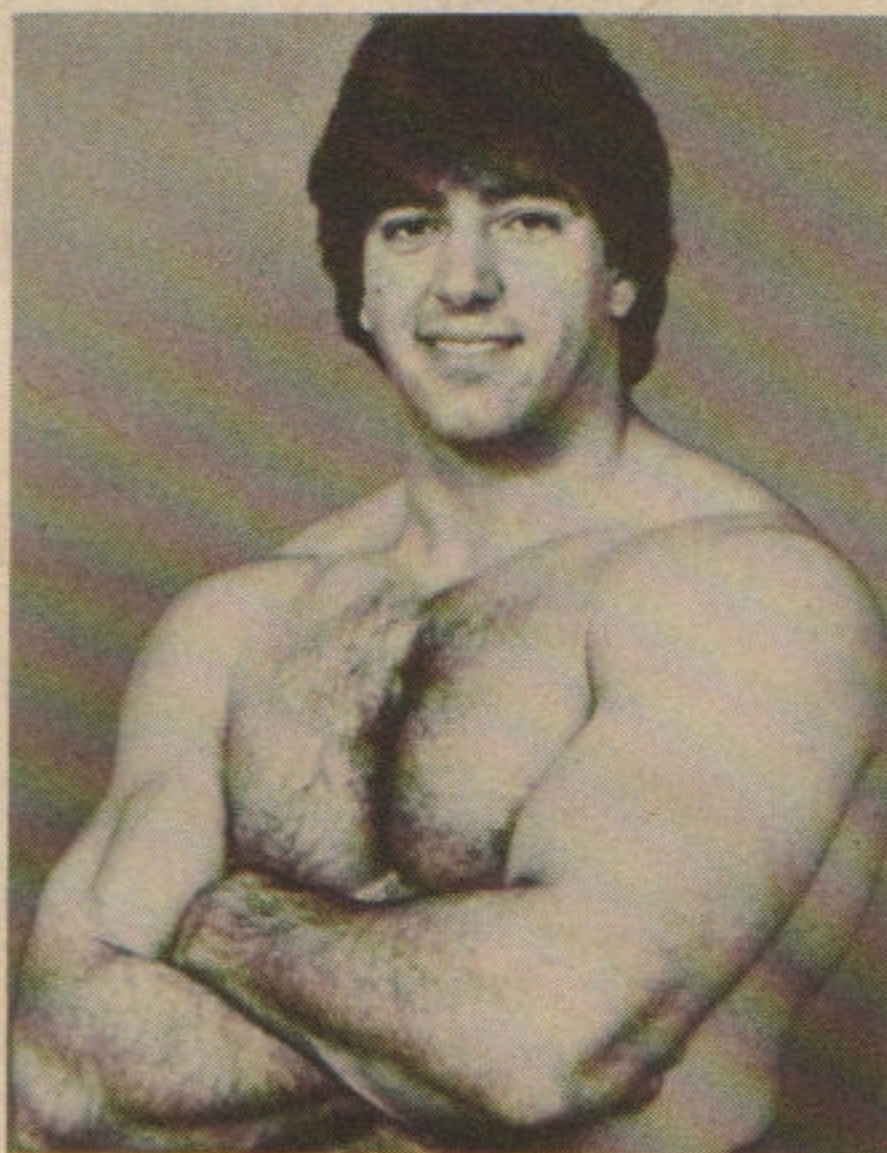
I would like to know what you think of the "contests" concerning pro wrestlers such as "sexiest wrestler" and "most popular wrestler."

Also, I would like to know what you think of Adrian Adonis.

CINDY PARRIS  
Frankfort, KY

Dear Cindy,

I think contests such as you describe are a wonderful way for athletic losers like Tommy Rich,



Wrestling fans are so taken with the appearance of Rick Martel, they are blinded to the fact that he simply cannot wrestle.

Rick Martel, and Brad Armstrong to get some attention. It is a way to have fans forget that these bozos can't wrestle. If there were no such contests, incompetents such as the above and others like Tito Santana wouldn't be noticed at all. Contests such as these provide a way for wrestlers without honor to be honored by fans without intelligence.

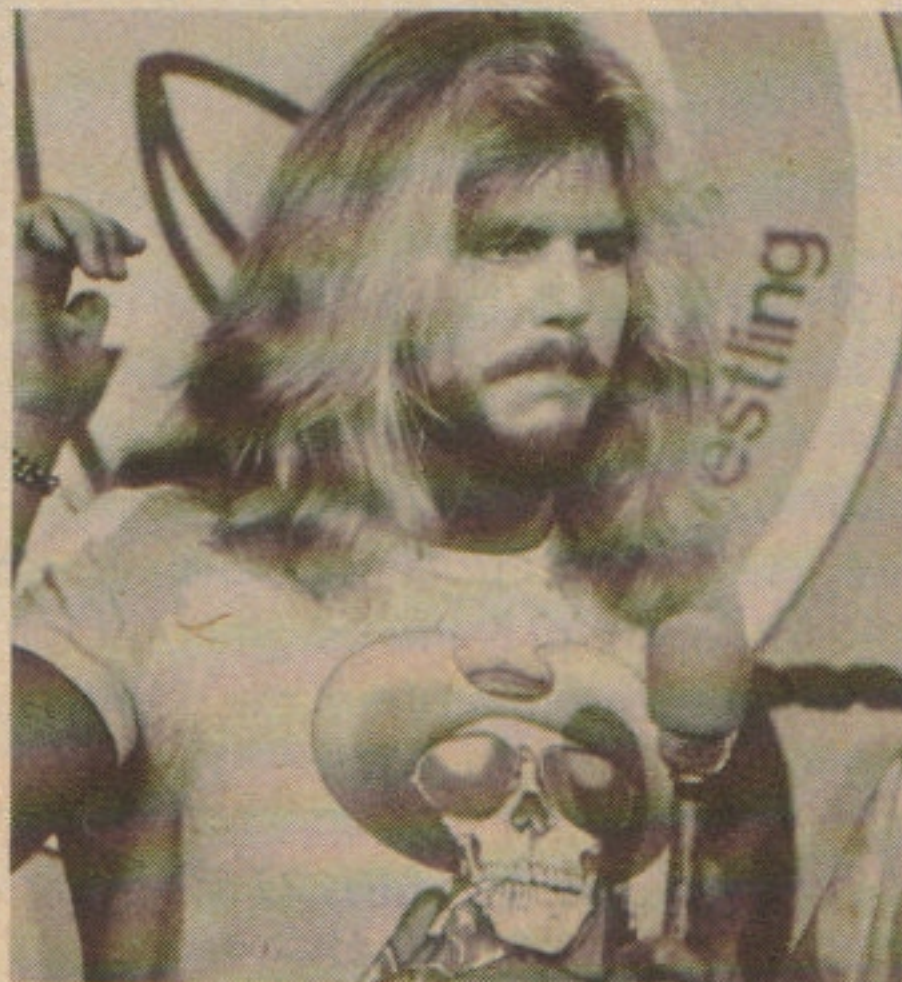
As for Adrian Adonis, I agree with any other thinking fan—he is three years away from being one of the best in the sport's history.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

In your last column you said that watching Michael Hayes wrestle is a sad sight! I totally disagree.

He was down here in the Southeastern area and proved to be a great wrestler. He won the hearts of many women. We all love him.

I agree with the two young ladies who in your last column



It's not bad enough that Michael Hayes has thrown away a promising career. Now he's trying to drag young Terry Gordy down with him.

said the next time you start shoving around your opinions, there is another place to put them besides the fans' faces.

KIM ALLEN  
Foley, AL

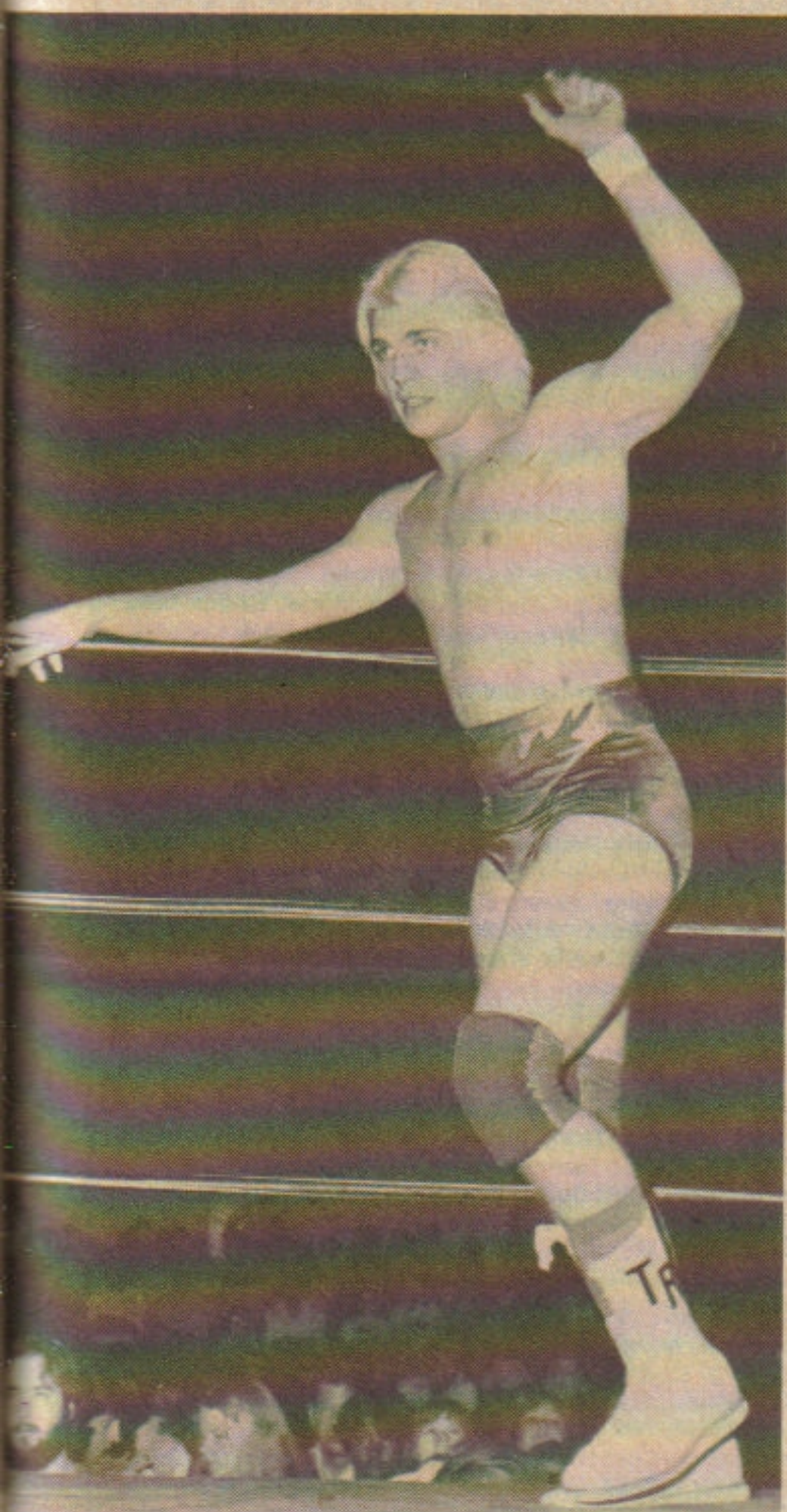


Dear Ms. Allen,

I'm so glad Michael Hayes won your heart. This gives you an excuse not to think. It's interesting that you don't mention any wrestling skills he may possess, because even your own heart can't imagine him as an accomplished athlete. Hayes has thrown away his early promise for the chance to win a few unthinking hearts. It's a pity and a shame.

Dear "Brains" Shocket,

When I first read *PWI* and saw your column, I thought anybody with their own column had to be



*When will the fans come to the realization that Tommy Rich is nothing more than a fair-haired wimp? Rich has not progressed one bit since his wrestling debut.*

pretty smart. But I think you have a room to rent upstairs (if you know what I mean). How you get off insulting such great wrestlers is beyond me. If I were Tommy Rich and I read what you said about me

I would knock your head off. It would be easy because it's empty.

KASEY AKERS

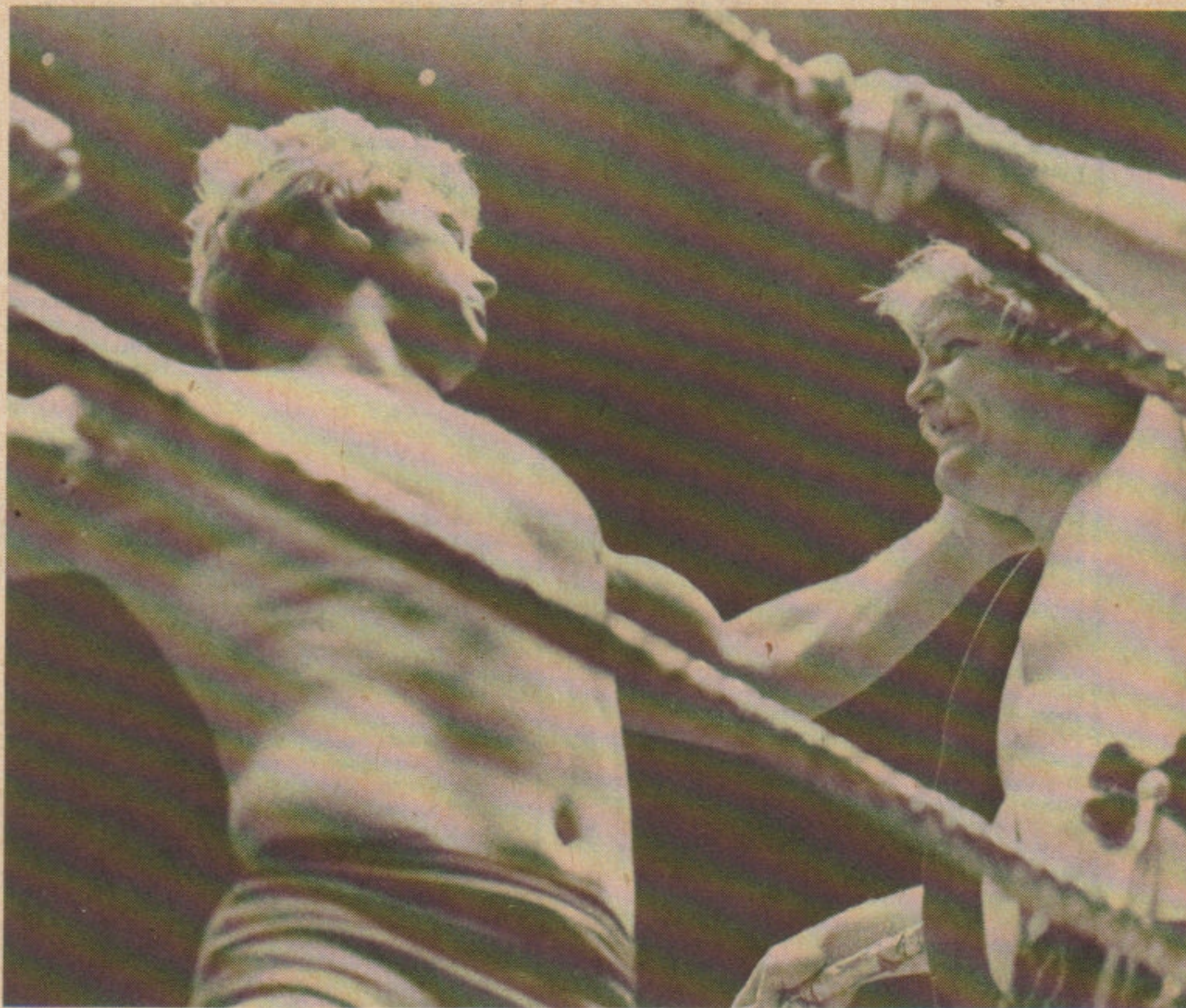
Davenport, IA

Dear "Eloquent" Akers,

When I first read your letter, I thought you might actually have something intelligent to say, but I soon realized that you were just another lover of wormslime (if you know what I mean). I wish I did have a room to rent; I could use the extra cash.

Dear Dan,

I couldn't agree with you more. Everyone says that these "good guys" are much better than the so-called "bad guys." Don't get me wrong, I still think Pedro Morales is the best. On the other hand, a wimp like WWF champ Howdy Doody Backlund is the worst piece of smelly garbage in wrestling. I mean, tell me that you don't see the "good guys" attacking "bad guys" even before they have time to take their jackets off.



*Bobby Backlund assaults Stan Hansen before the challenger can even remove his jacket. The fans consider Backlund a "good guy."*

I just had to say this so I could get it off my chest.

NEIL EISENBERG

Brooklyn, NY

Dear Neil,

More and more, fans are realizing that labels are tools used by commissioners to punish wrestlers who think for themselves. Every time a fan boos a "bad guy," he's being taken for a chump. It's nice to see so many fans refusing to be taken anymore.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

Andre the Giant is not an animal or a freak! Killer Khan got what he deserved.

Andre is the greatest, along with Ted Dibiase and Tommy Rich. Dan must stand for Dumb And Nuts.

LAURA LINZE

Caldwell, ID

Dear Ms. Linze,

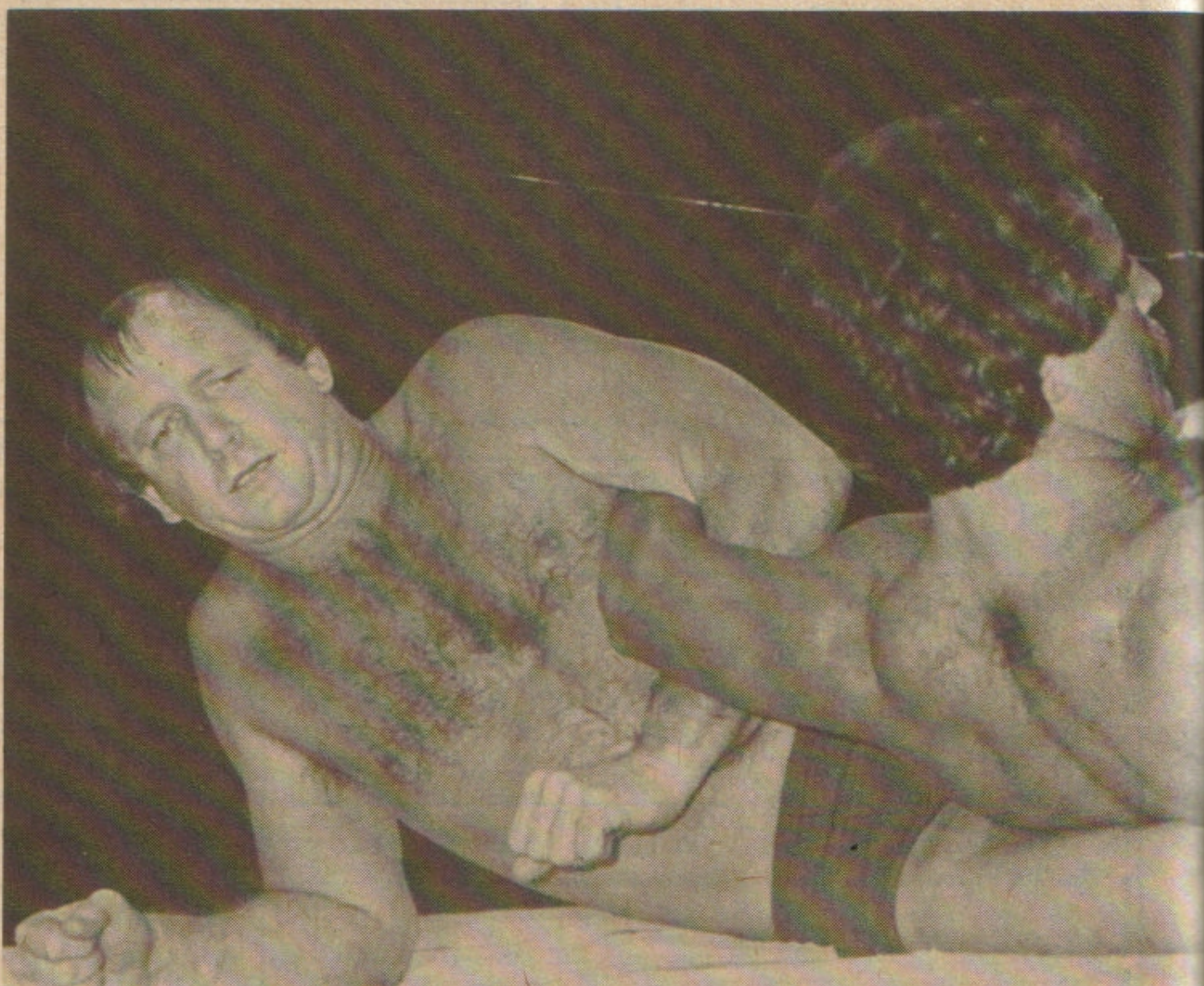
Your wrestling perception is matched only by your elegant prose. □



**Every issue, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport**

**PRESS  
CONFERENCE**  
DORY FUNK JR.

*(Dory Funk Jr., former NWA champion and winner of more regional crowns than almost anybody in wrestling, is a hard man to fathom. He has been one of the most respected scientific wrestlers in history, but today he is one of the most feared and cunning rulebreakers. His friendships and associations are cloudy and he is willing to do nothing to clear them up. He is very close to David Von Erich, a young grappler who has also deserted the scientific ranks for a rulebreaking career. To try to understand what exactly is happening in the career of Dory Funk Jr., we sent editors Stu Saks, Craig Peters, and Peter King to speak with the man himself.)*





**"Someone once asked me if I could remember being merciful to an opponent. I figured there might have been some time early in my career, when I was naive. I couldn't think of any instance, though."**



**PETER KING:** What do you say to fans who claim you turned an honorable David Von Erich into a rulebreaker?

**DORY FUNK JR.:** I say nothing to them.

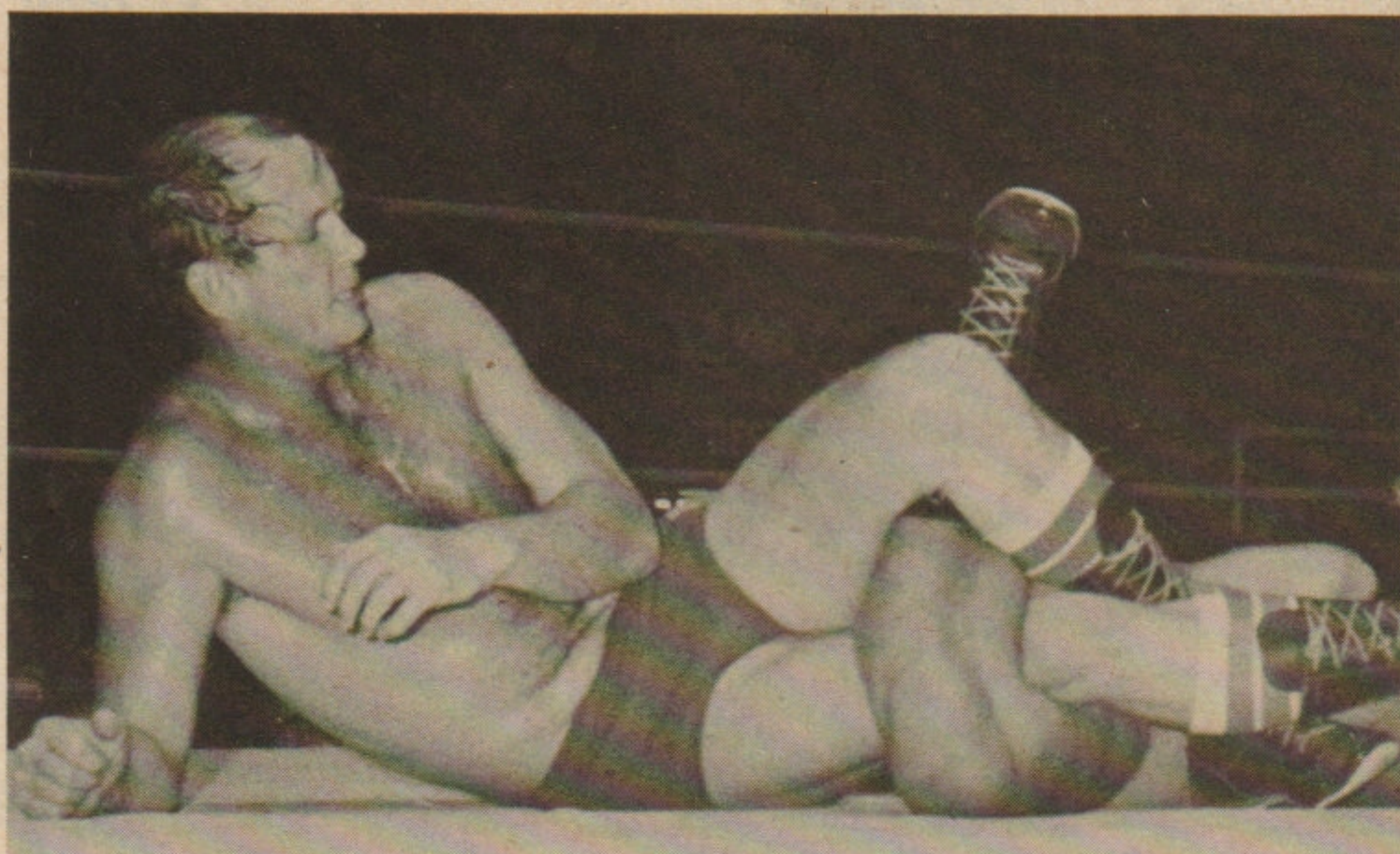
**STU SAKS:** Don't you feel any need to explain yourself?

**FUNK:** No. I do all my talking in the ring. What happens outside the ring—who I choose to make my friends and business partners—is my own business.

**CRAIG PETERS:** Not really. You have a profound influence on the entire wrestling community. Your alliances affect everyone.

**FUNK:** I don't have any alliances that everyone doesn't know about.

**PETERS:** What about your rumored alliance with the notorious manager, James J. Dillon?



*Dory Funk Jr. is most proficient on the mat. Opposite page: Funk attempts to roll Mike Graham into a pinning combination from a scissorslock. Above: Dory expertly applies a leglock on arch-rival Jack Brisco.*

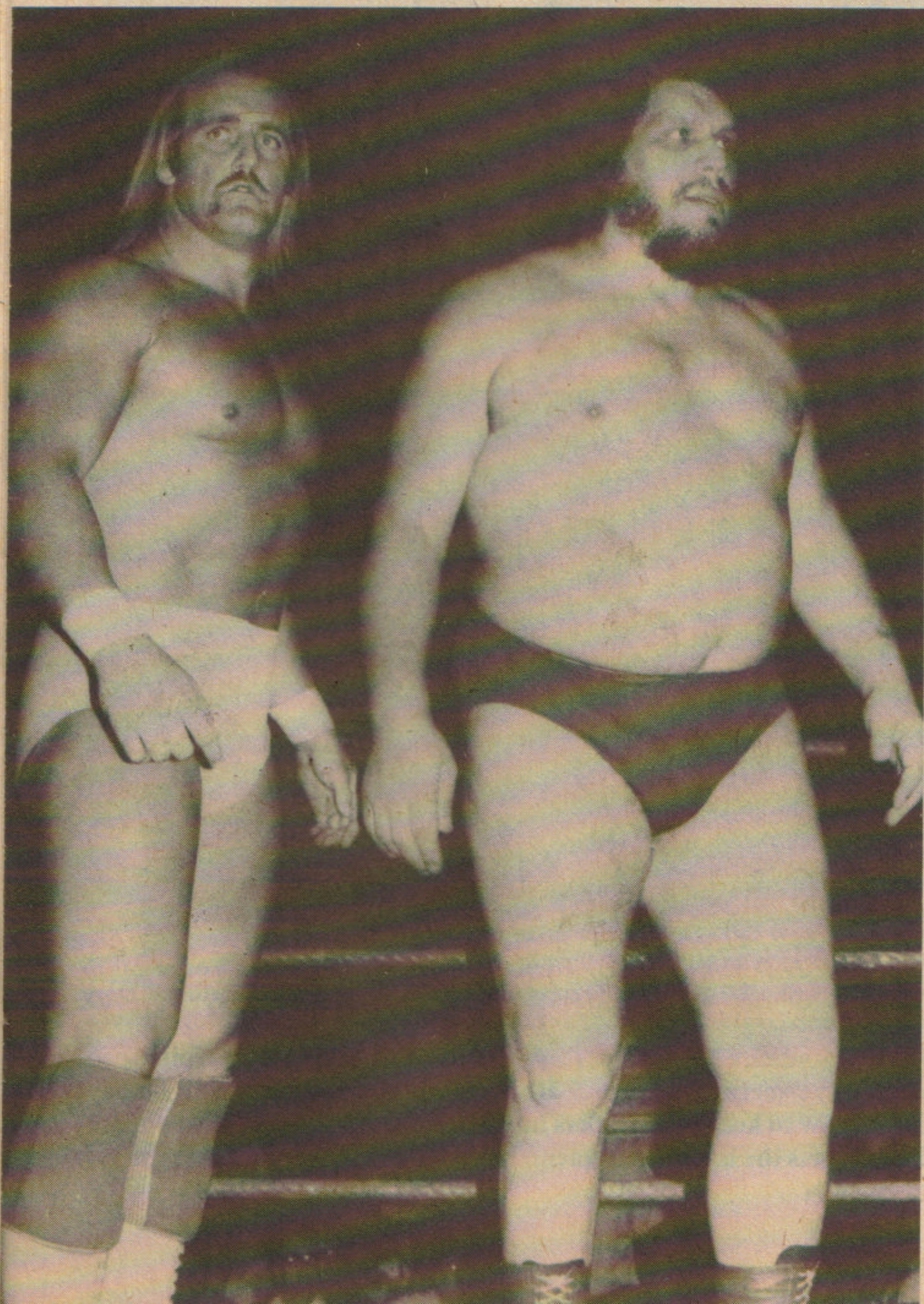
**FUNK:** I admire Dillon, as I admire any successful man. He knows how to keep his wrestlers in line and gets the most out of them.

**KING:** Speaking of keeping people in line, you appear to be having some sort of trouble maintain-

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# **"The Brain's" Scheme Backfires! HOW BOBBY HEENAN BROUGHT ANDRE AND HULK HOGAN TOGETHER**



SOMETIMES, THE MOST evil intentions bring about the best results. At the same time, every so often justice is served. But let's start at the beginning.

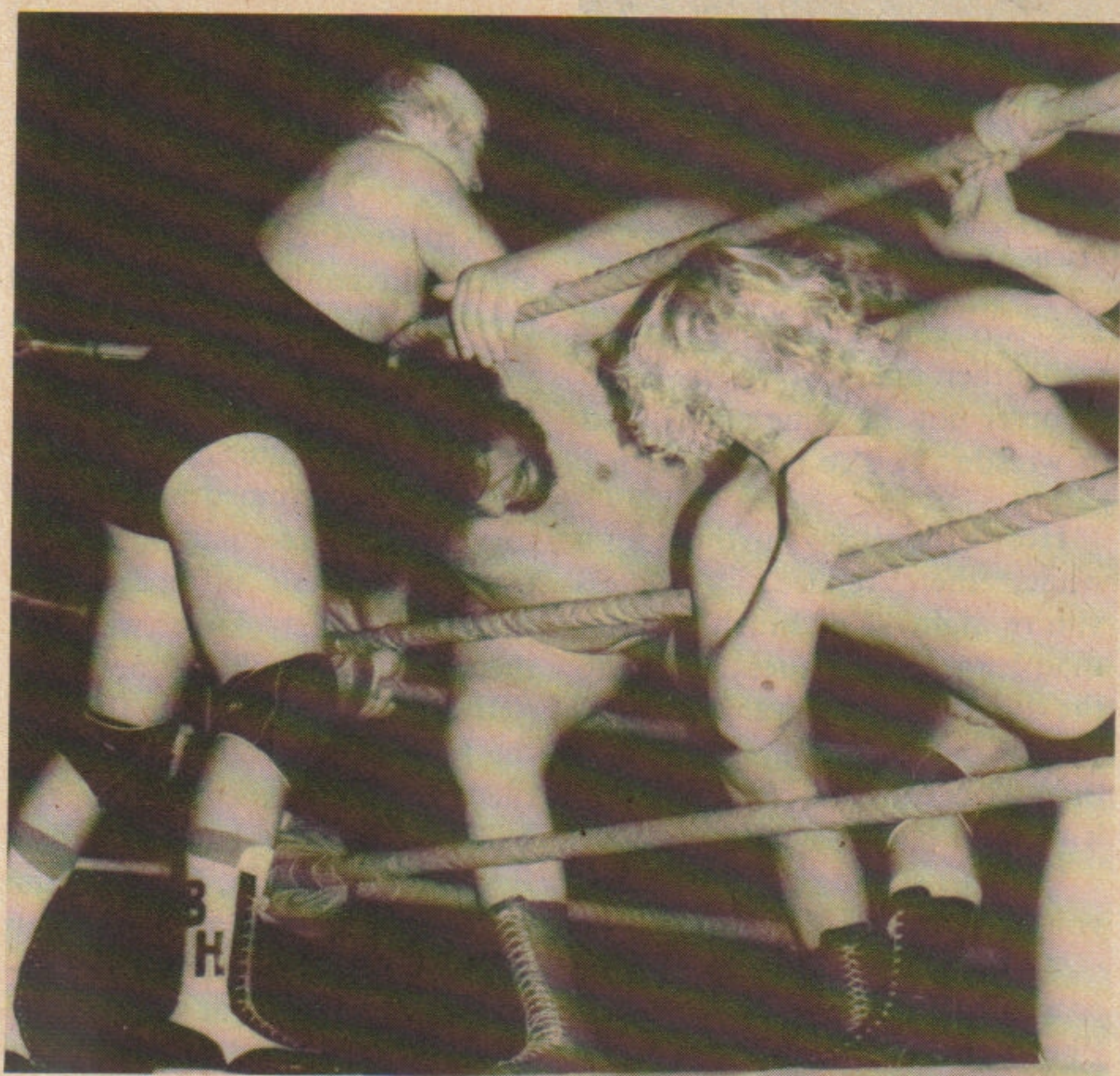
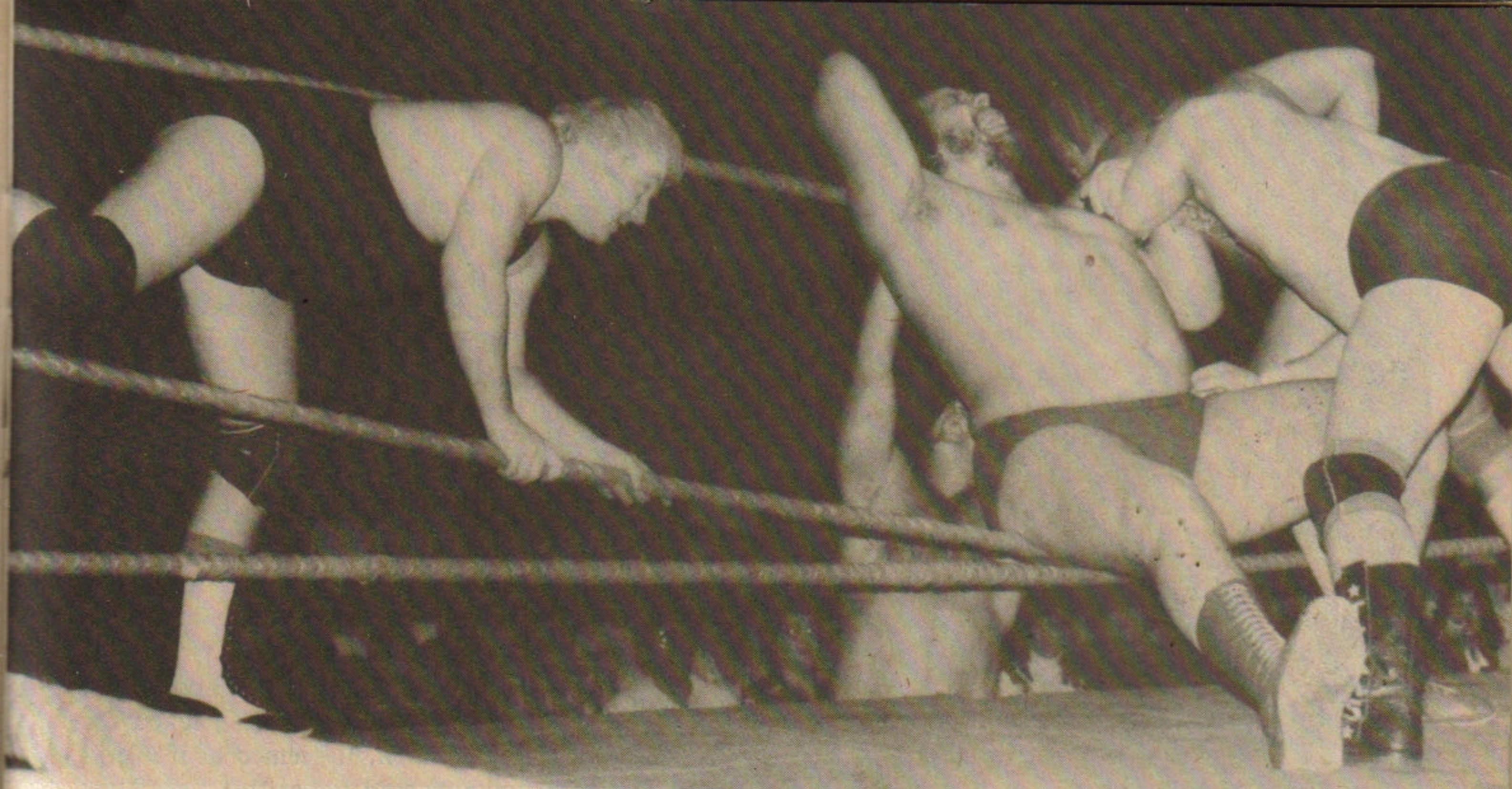
Hulk Hogan was the biggest threat Nick Bockwinkel had to face in years. Bockwinkel is AWA champion and managed by Bobby Heenan. One of the reasons Bockwinkel is champion is that Heenan is expert at getting rid of threats.

Heenan was negotiating a contract at AWA offices when he overheard that Andre the Giant was coming to the AWA. To a beleaguered Heenan, this might appear as one trouble too many. Instead, his devious mind saw it as his salvation.

"Boy, are you guys going to make a fortune," Heenan casually remarked. When they immediately asked him how, Bobby innocently answered, "Why, you guys must be kidding me. I know you brought Andre to the area to wrestle Hogan. When those two were in the WWF, they were the most bitter enemies around. Their matches made fortunes. Hell, *I'll* buy a ticket to see those two wrestle. Yep, pitting Andre against Hogan is a license to print money. Boy, you guys are as sharp as they come!"

With that, Heenan got up and





*Above: Hulk Hogan (far right) attempts to free his partner, Andre the Giant, from the double-teaming effort of Nick Bockwinkel (outside the ring) and Bobby Duncum. Bobby Heenan is about to join the action. Left: After pounding Duncum to the canvas and ramming Heenan in the midsection, Andre will retreat to his corner.*

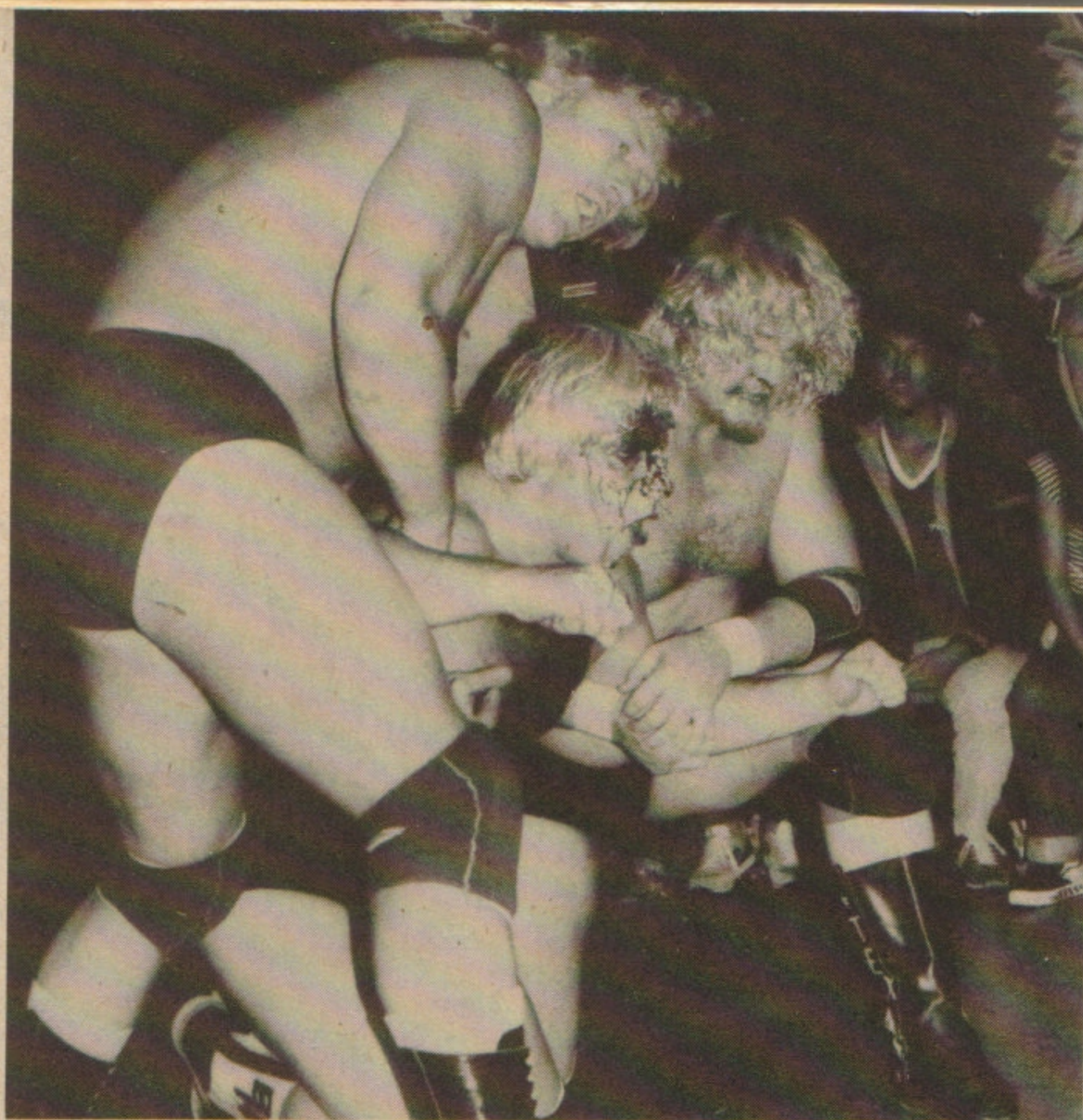
left. He didn't look back; he didn't have to. Heenan knows when he hooks a fish.

It didn't surprise Heenan to hear that Hogan and Andre had signed a contract to wrestle each other. When the bout was announced, Bockwinkel took his manager out to dinner. The champion felt it was the least he could do for the man who got rid of Hogan and kept Andre away from him at the same time.

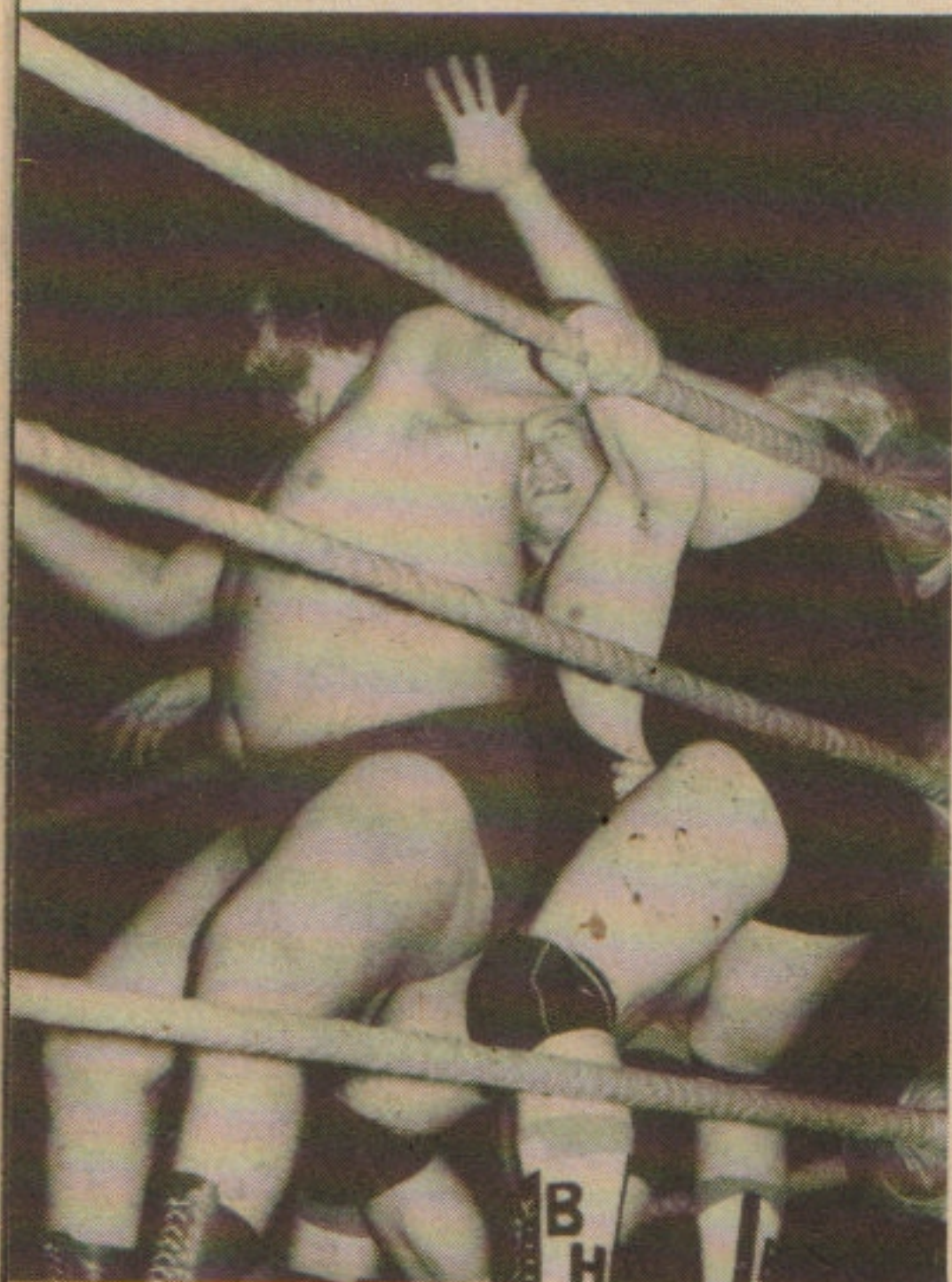
At this point, unknown to Heenan, his plan began to unravel. Andre went to an arena to scout Hogan. He was stunned by

**Bobby Heenan had a bright idea about killing two birds with one stone. Then the sitting ducks became birds of prey, sending Heenan and his stunned henchman flying**





*Above: Bockwinkel and Duncum come to the aid of a badly cut Heenan. Below: Andre puts the squeeze on Ken Patera and Heenan. Four against two would ordinarily be insurmountable odds. But not when the two are Hogan and Andre!*



what he saw. Hogan was wrestling as a fan favorite, being honorable and adored. It didn't take long for Andre to realize he'd been set up.

After the match, Andre went back to Hogan's dressing room.

The two gargantuan men faced each other uneasily. Andre said, "You're not the same man I used to wrestle. You're not the man I hate."

Hogan didn't say anything for a while, then replied, "I guess you're right. I'm much smarter than I was then. I guess getting to the top doesn't mean that much if you're not proud how you got there. I decided to change before it was too late to start over."

"I don't see any point wrestling you," Andre said.

"It'll be tough breaking the contract," Hogan continued, "but I guess it could be done. We just have to make them a substitute offer they can't refuse. That shouldn't be too hard."

It wasn't. When Heenan heard the offer, he begged the AWA officials to accept. He promised to make them more money in a night than they could get from a month of Andre vs. Hogan matches.

Against their better judgment, but because all the wrestlers begged for it, they took the counter offer. They then made sure the arena's insurance was in perfect order.

The deal was simple: Andre and Hogan would wrestle any four men. Heenan volunteered himself, Nick Bockwinkel, Ken Patera, and Bobby Duncum. A more reprehensible crew would be hard to find. Heenan was sure the quartet could destroy the duo. He even scheduled a "going away" party for Andre and Hogan, stating publicly, "Those two would be sure to leave wrestling after this slaughter."

Heenan was right about one thing—the arena was packed for this match. It seemed as if everyone wanted to see this war. They weren't disappointed. From the opening bell, it was hell on earth.

Yet, almost from the start, things didn't go as Heenan planned. Hogan and Andre worked together with remarkable grace and confidence. They had prepared thoroughly for this battle and it showed. Even outnumbered, they controlled the action. It soon became apparent that Heenan had assumed an easy victory. Within five minutes, the four teammates were suffering from shellshock. They knew what hit them and didn't like it one bit.

It didn't take long for three of the four to decide that one of the them had gotten them into an ambush. It became hard to tell if Bockwinkel, Patera, and Duncum considered Heenan a friend or an enemy. Though they outnumbered their foes four to two, the odds weren't good enough. One of the most fearsome quartets in wrestling history fled to the dressing room in shame.

The arena rocked with cheers as the four fled. Standing victorious in the center of the ring were Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant, their past differences as far away as their evening's opponents. □



# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

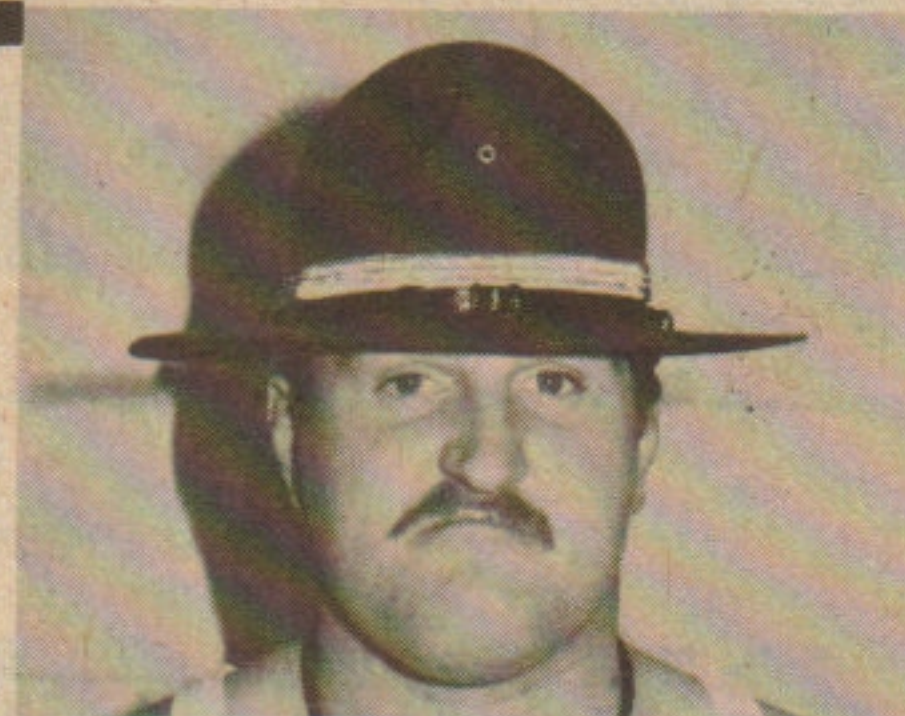
## TONY ATLAS

"I met Jesse 'The Half-Body' in arm wrestling, in a pose-down, and in a one-on-one wrestling match, and he showed himself for what he truly was: a big mouth and a phony. He couldn't take the pressure I put on him and the fans put on him, so the coward ran to Japan. Good riddance."



## SGT. SLAUGHTER

"Wahoo McDaniel stole my U.S. title from me, he is an un-American thief and he will pay for his insubordination to the belt. The U.S. title demands that there be a man of strength and character wearing the belt, a man who can bring discipline and order to the title and to the wrestlers in the country. That only man is Sgt. Slaughter."



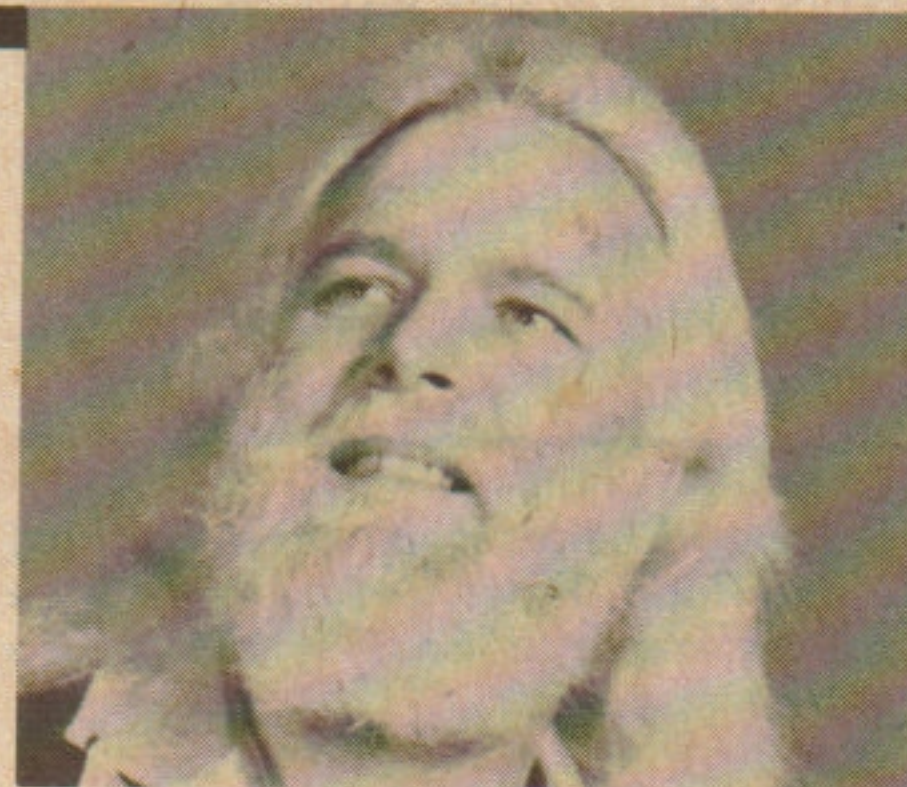
## STAN HANSEN

"Me and Ole, we're the best damn tag team on the face of this earth. We wrestle all over the world, and we always win. Our next win is going to be in the finals of the NWA tag team tournament, and I can taste the victory already. It's going to be a great day when we strap those belts around our waists!"



## JIMMY VALIANT

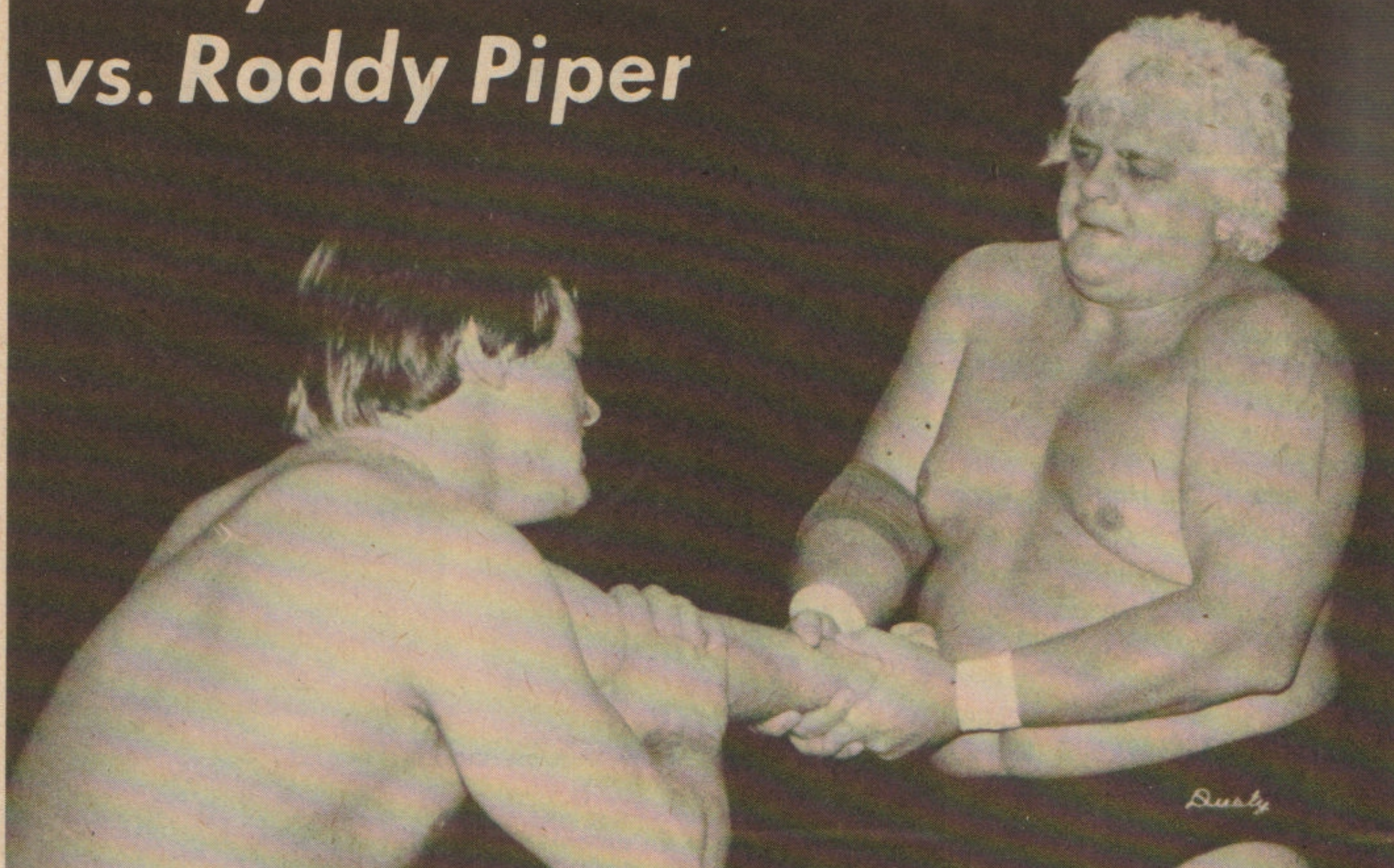
"No matter what he does, no matter how far he follows me, no matter how much he hounds me, no matter where or when or how, Ivan Koloff will not get the best of the 'Boogie-Woogie Man.' I want to assure all of my fans that I will win this battle with Koloff, and I will win decisively."



(Continued on page 51)



## Dusty Rhodes vs. Roddy Piper



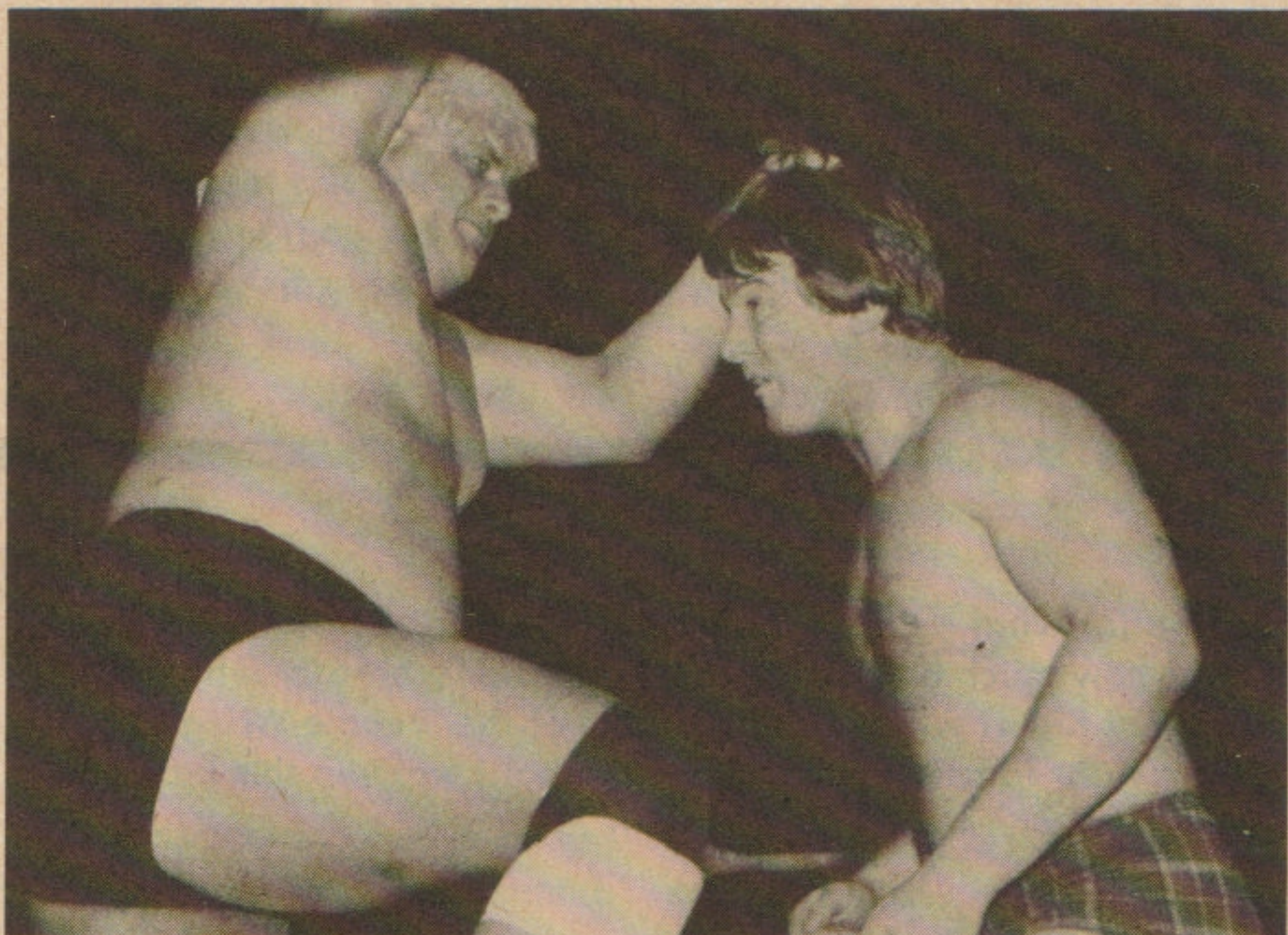
## LAST CHANCE FOR GEORGIA WRESTLING?

**T**HERE ARE JUST so many times a man can be hero. Sooner or later, he tries too hard but not enough. Then he becomes a martyr, soon to become a memory.

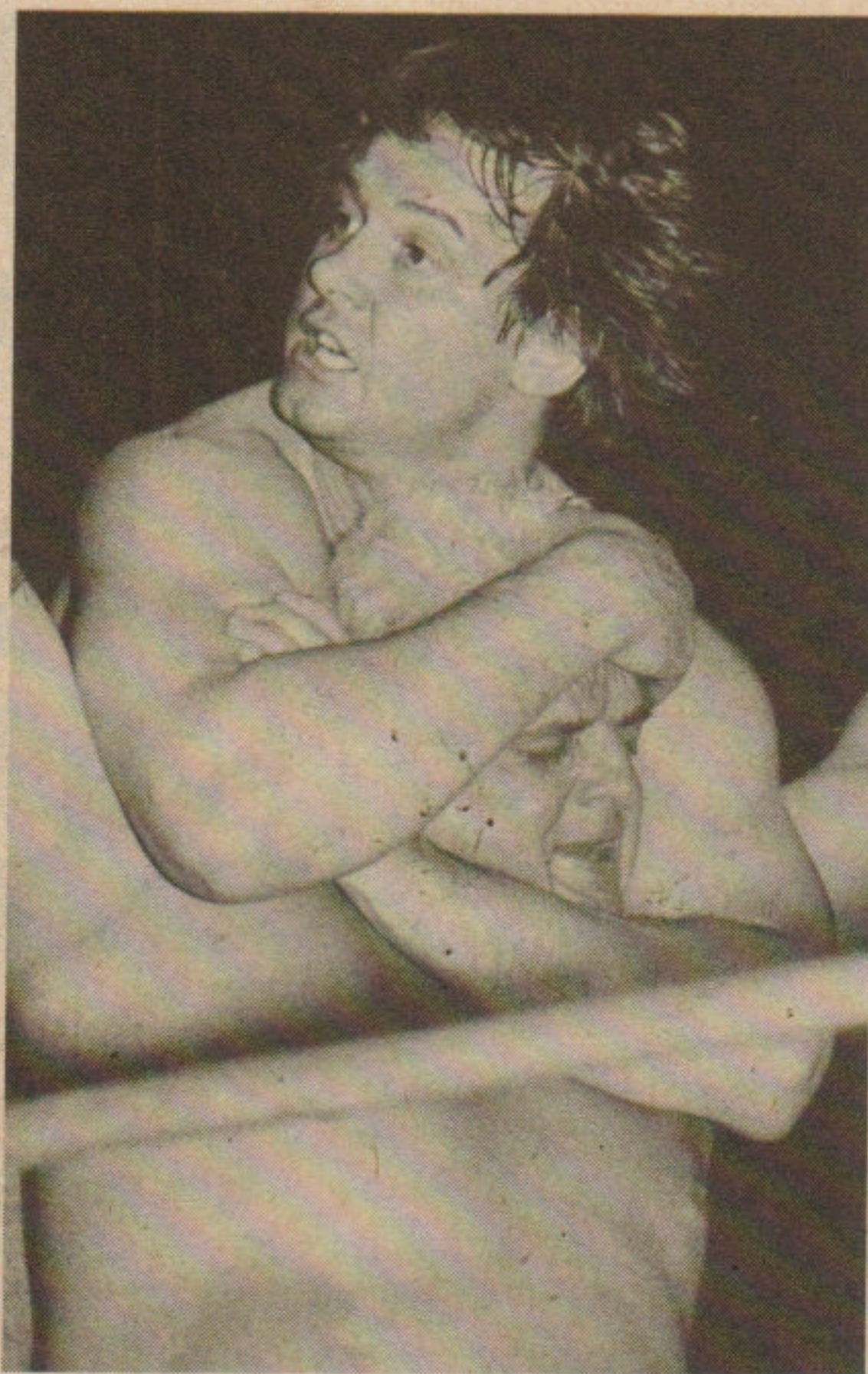
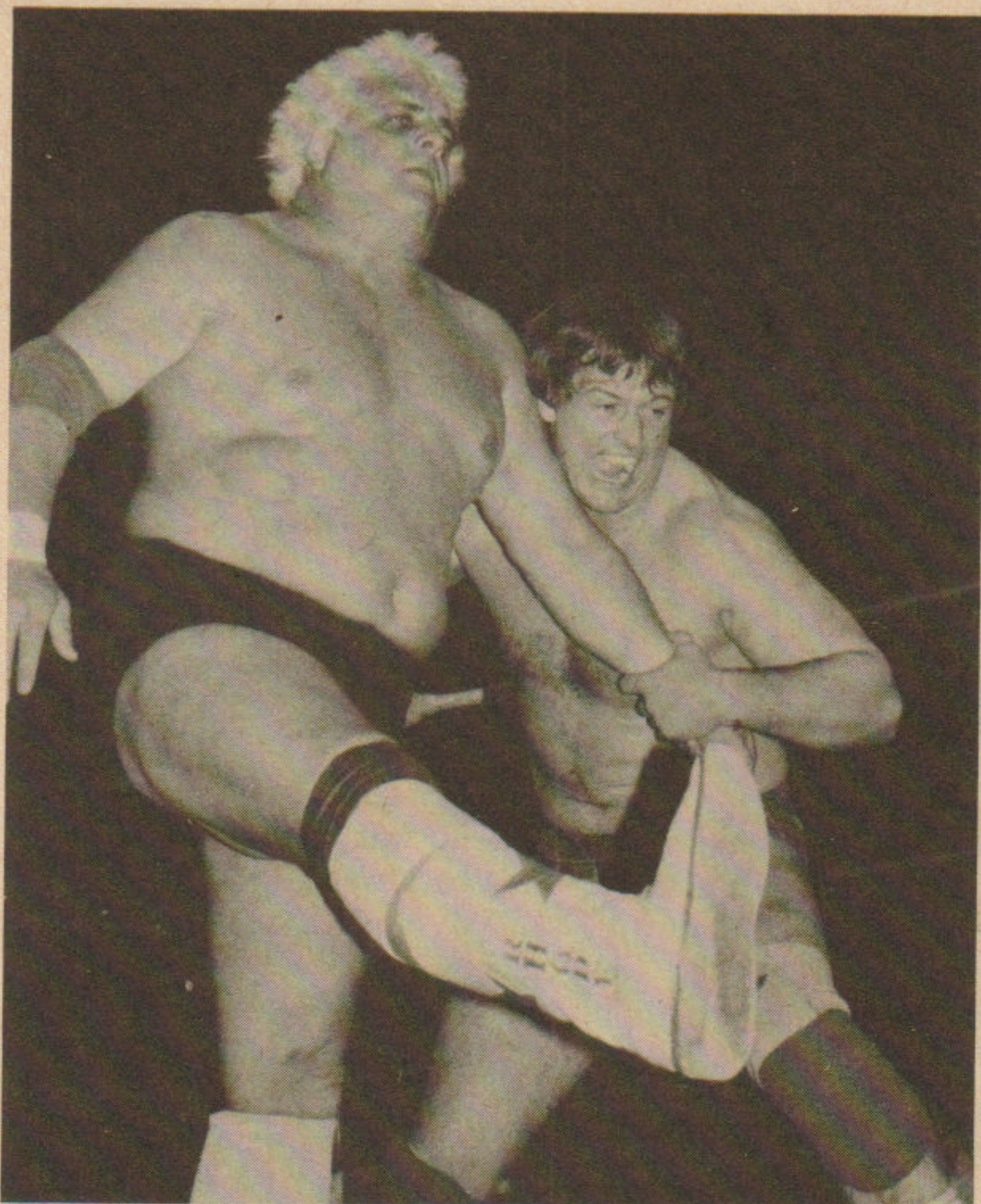
Dusty Rhodes knows the risks. He's put his career on the line often enough and has flirted with disaster more times for people to think the two of them are going steady. Yet, Dusty Rhodes continues to take the risks because he promised himself he would.

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*If Dusty Rhodes can't do something about Roddy Piper, we just might have to get used to hearing the Scot's piercing voice.*







*Piper throws Rhodes into the ropes (left) and applies the sleeperhold as "The Dream" rebounds (above). Dusty managed to escape by maneuvering to the ropes.*

## Like a conquering Genghis Khan, Roddy Piper dominates and demoralizes Georgia wrestling. One man, Dusty Rhodes, is determined to stop him. If Rhodes fails, all hope is lost

Rhodes only explains when he's in a reflective mood, and then only to close friends. "It's impossible to make people understand," Rhodes says softly, "so I don't try. But I have a vision of what wrestling should be. And it's a beautiful vision, one that can keep you going through the bad times and make you realize there's something more important than yourself. This vision is so beautiful, that risking everything to achieve it is a small price to pay.

"It may sound corny, but I believe wrestling has a responsibility to America. As a sport, it should reflect the best this coun-

try stands for—justice, dignity, and decency. When people see a great wrestling match, they should feel just a little bit better about themselves.

"A friend once asked me why I have to always take the tough matches, try to show the real rats they can't control wrestling. Hell, if I didn't do that, I wouldn't be true to my vision. And a man without a vision is just taking up space."

Roddy Piper has heard Dusty's explanation for taking risks no other wrestler dares take.

"The first time I heard it," Piper sneers, "I laughed. My sides hurt from laughing so hard. Dusty

Rhodes says he has a vision, says he must defend wrestling's honor, says he is willing to risk his career. What he doesn't say, but what he really means, is that he is stupid.

"Yes, stupid! This is a business. You're in it to make money, *if you're smart*. Dusty Rhodes is not smart. He doesn't plan, he doesn't think ahead. Now, I'm smart. I'm like a brilliant chess master. When I come into a territory, I know what I'm going to do and how I'll do it. I knew before I ever set foot into NWA territory how I'd take over the federation. And even someone as simple as

*(Continued on page 66)*

PHOTOS BY EDDIE CHESLOCK



# Ric Flair's Startling Confession:

## "I HATE BEING CHAMPION!"

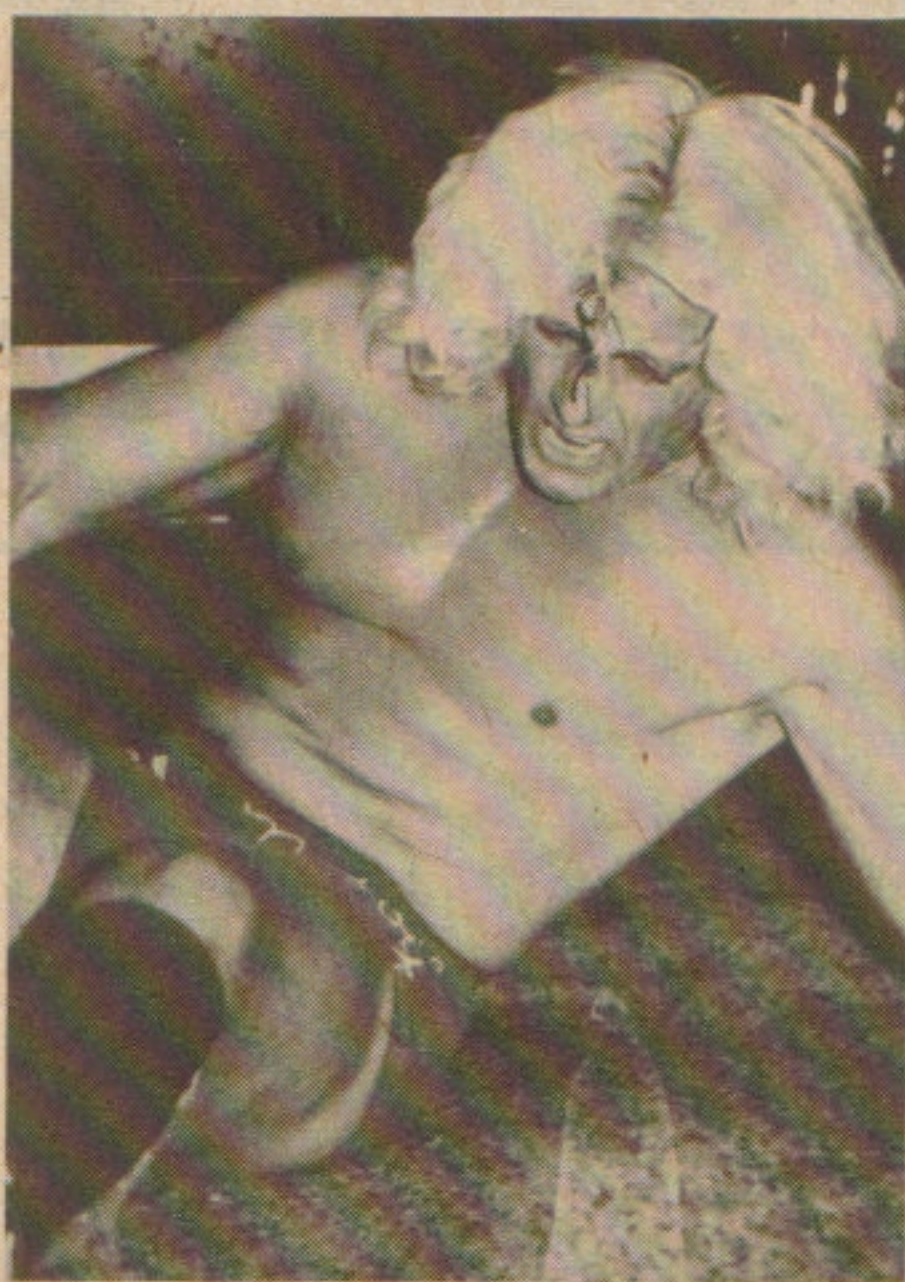
**I**T WAS THE type of place frequented by people who can't stop when the nightclubs close. This after-hours club catered to men and women who don't go home until the sun comes up. One dawn, as the sun was coming up, Ric Flair walked out onto the almost deserted city street.

"I once lived like this," he murmured, "reckless and in love with good times. This is the first time I've caroused this late since I won my title. And instead of being reckless, I have a week off to recover. I planned it. I never planned anything before."

Flair walked down the street, listening to his boot-heels clack against the concrete, enjoying their sound. Flair's stride was regular and purposeful, not the walk of a man who's been playing hard all night.

"Three months," he said to no one in particular, "I planned three months for this night. I worked for it. I made sure I'd have more than enough time to recover. I was going to be outrageous like no

rowdy has ever been outrageous before. Look at me." He stopped and forced his companion to inspect him. "Look at me." He laughed without finding anything funny. "I didn't even enjoy myself. I kept holding back, afraid of what might happen. When every-



*Blood trickling down his nose, Flair tries to regain his senses before being counted out of the ring.*

one else was getting wild, I was sitting back watching.

"My body took less abuse tonight than if I went home and watched television. This title is controlling me. It doesn't let me live. Everything I do is done to keep myself strong and fit and hungry for victory. It doesn't let me enjoy myself!"

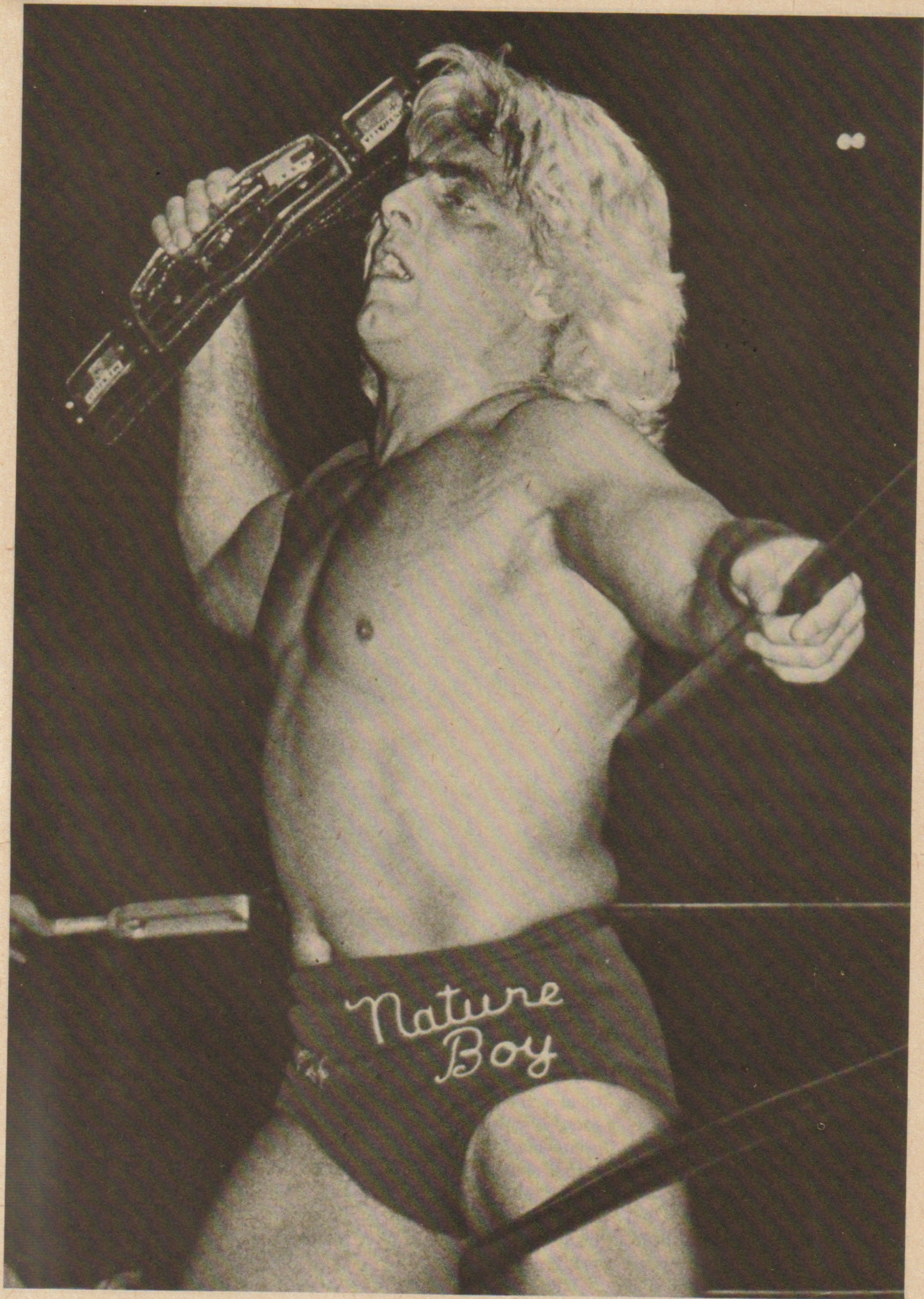
Flair went back to his hotel room and went to sleep. After all, he said in his bitter farewell, he had to get his rest.

More and more people are noticing that Flair is beginning to consider the NWA title his enemy. He also considers it the most wonderful thing in the world. These two tensions are tearing him apart. Perhaps he's gotten too far too fast for his own good.

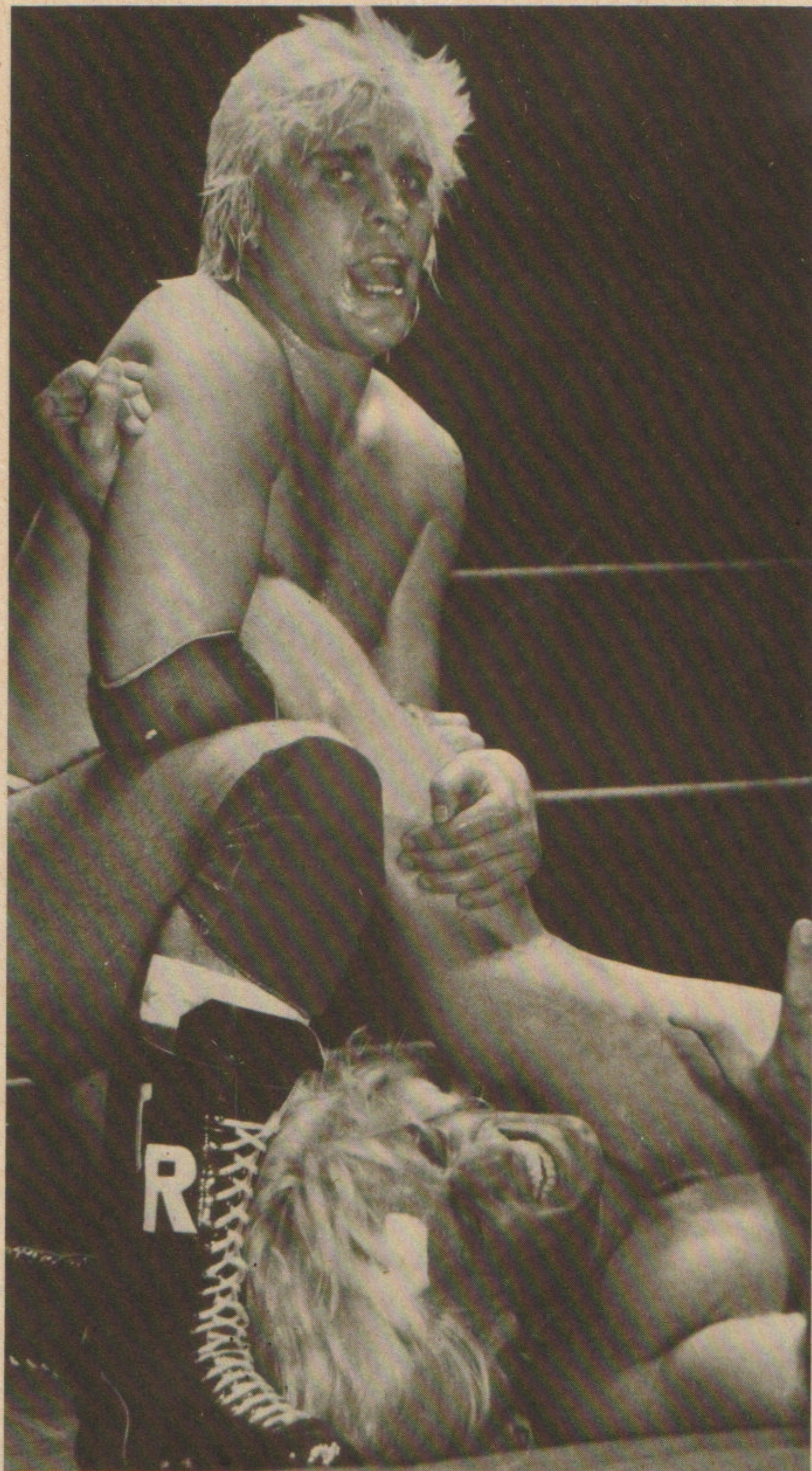
"Wrestling is a hard life," Harley Race says, "and a championship makes it even harder. The pressure is intense. What's more, it never lets up. One slip, one mistake, one night when you're not at your best, and you're an ex-champion. When I

**It takes more to being NWA champion than winning the title. Ric Flair is finding out the hard way. Torn by tensions only champions can understand, Flair's greatest accomplishment may be destroying his career and life!**









held the title, I lived like a monk. It takes a certain kind of maturity to do that. Flair doesn't have the maturity.

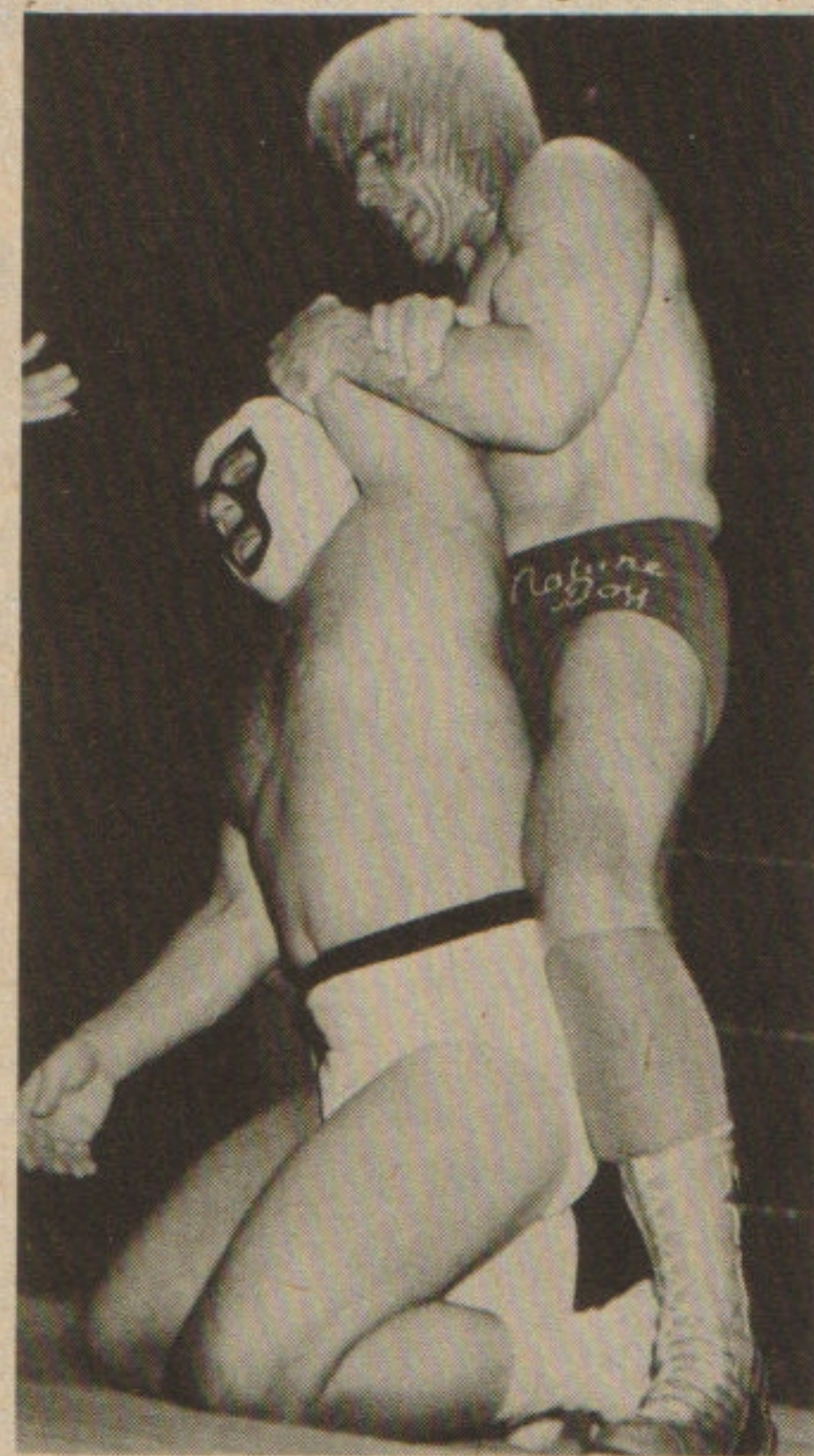
"It's going to drive him crazy. It drives all of us a little nuts, but it'll drive Flair around the bend. He'd rather die than give up the belt, but the belt will kill him a lit-

tle at a time. He'll lose everything soon—the title, his career, maybe even what little mind he has. I've seen it happen before. Just because a guy has the physical gifts to win the title doesn't mean he's ready to be champion. Flair isn't ready."

The afternoon after his failed



Night after night, the NWA champion must defend his belt against the world's premier competition. Tommy Rich has Flair in pain (left), but Ric holds advantages over Jack Brisco (above) and Mr. Wrestling II (below).

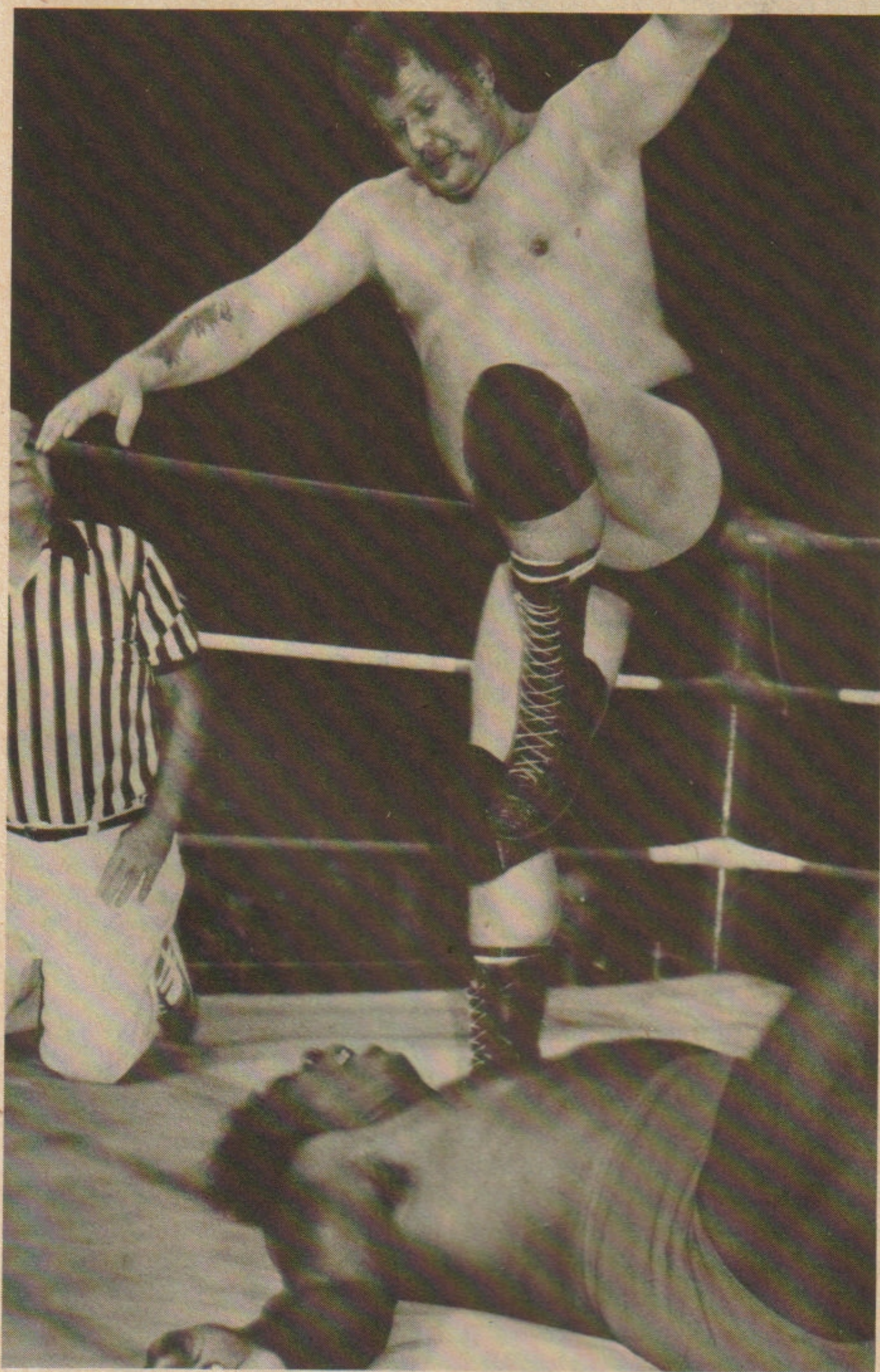


celebration, Ric Flair wended his weary way to the gym. Though he would rather do anything else, he had to work out. His body had to be ready for the next challenger and the next and the next. There will be no rest until he loses the title. And losing was something he refused to consider.

(Continued on page 50)



# HARLEY RACE: HOW A CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY COST HIM THE NWA TITLE



*Race rises to his toes on one leg before driving his knee into the face of a downed Bobo Brazil.*

PHOTOS BY SCOTT RÖMER

About 20 years from now, Harley Race will look back on the incident and laugh. Then again, he may not. Race had prepared perfectly for his title match against Ric Flair except for one thing—he didn't count on his own success the night before!

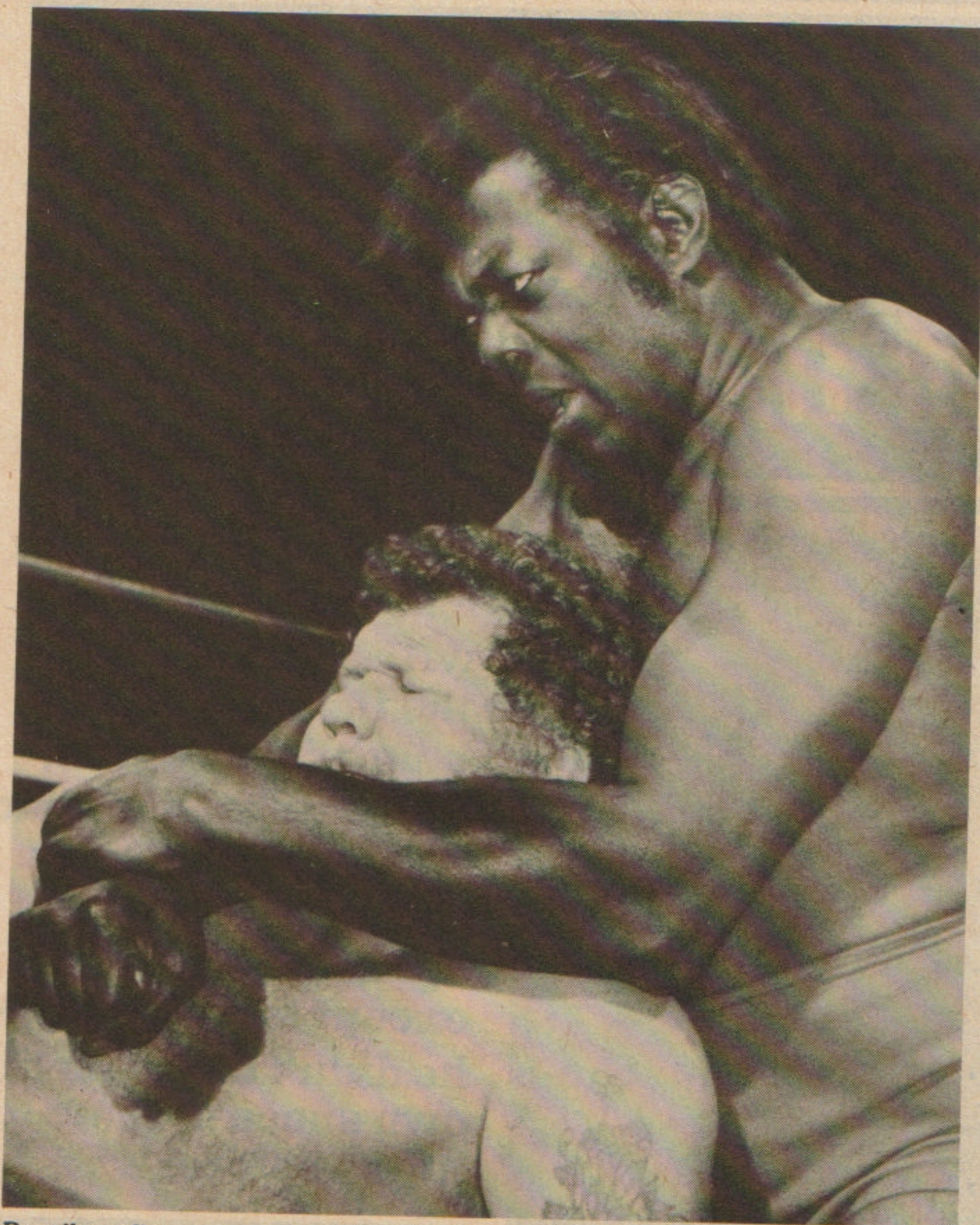
**T**HE CRASH WAS caused by the locker being hurled against a wall. The splintering noise was due to a bench being transformed into a pile of random splinters. The cries that could be mistaken for an enraged bull elephant came from Harley Race.

Contrary to popular belief, it's not Race's usual custom to rearrange the architecture of locker rooms. This was a special occasion that found him losing from winning.

It all started several weeks before this tempestuous evening. Race signed for a title shot against NWA champion Ric Flair. Harley has often expressed his burning desire to capture the NWA title for an unprecedented seventh time.

Never has one wrestler prepared so diligently for battle as





**Brazil applies a cross-wrist headlock on Harley Race during their WWA title match (above). Bobo grabs a weary Race and rams his head into the ring apron (below, right).**

Race prepared for Flair. In the gym, people were afraid to get near him. He was locked in his own world, preparing for the match of his life. As he once told a reporter, "I'd rather be damned in hell than end my career without winning back my title."

Race took nothing for granted. The night before he was to wrestle Flair, he took a match against WWA champion Bobo Brazil. Bobo, cool and smart and superbly athletic, would be the perfect test for Race. Harley walked into that ring with a swagger one remembered from his best championship bouts.

It was much more than the match Harley expected. These two magnificent veterans battled

with a brilliance that left the crowd stunned. Each man was at his best. As so often happens in confrontations of this kind, the outcome was decided by luck. Race was a little bit luckier and won. He was the new WWA champion. The look on Harley's faced showed this to be one of the proudest moments of his life.

Then it all came apart. Back in his dressing room, Race called the airport to make sure his flight was leaving on time. He wanted to get plenty of rest before his brawl against Flair. The flight desk assured him everything was on schedule. He slammed down the phone jubilantly and went to take a shower.

He was all soaped up when he

heard a voice calling him. He turned off the water. Now he could hear that the voice belonged to a WWA commissioner.

"No rush," he was saying, "we can go over your schedule any time tonight. The match tomorrow is only 30 miles from here."

"What are you talking about?" Race shouted. "My match against Flair is almost 500 miles away."

"Your match against Flair is cancelled."

Race bolted out of the shower soaking wet. He ran up to the commissioner and shoved his chest into the smaller man's face. "You can't cancel that match!" he insisted.

"When you won the title, you cancelled the match. It says so in your contract. If you win the title, you must take over the ex-champion's scheduled defenses. Brazil was to wrestle tomorrow night. Now you take his place."

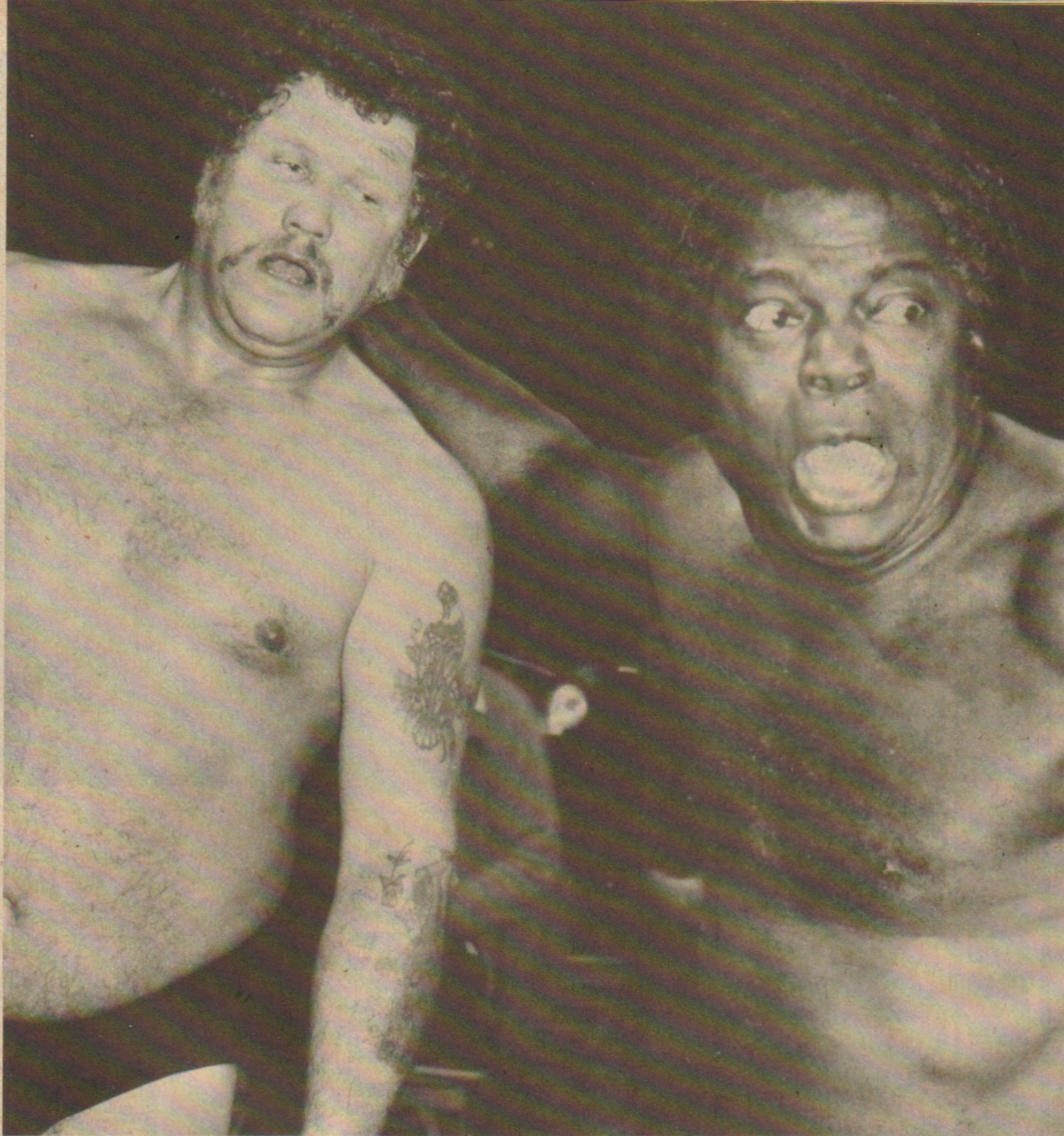
"I have a contract to wrestle Flair!"

"Not anymore, Mr. Race," announced a new speaker as he walked through the door. Race recognized him immediately. He was Bob Sefcik, lawyer for the WWA and a man nobody ever bests.

"If you look at your contract," he said, "the one in which you are







*Brazil, who for years was denied title opportunities by Race, lost the WWA championship but unintentionally denied Harley the opportunity to wrestle for his seventh NWA title.*

signed to wrestle Flair, I think you'd be interested in the middle of section 7, paragraph 4, that begins, 'The wrestler will be assured proper dressing room and shower facilities.' The subject of this section changes about four sentences in. 'In case of the wrestler winning a title between said date and date of the match, his championship obligations shall take precedence over this contract if so desired by either or

both commissions.' Mr. Race, we so desire."

"Don't I have any say in the matter?"

"It doesn't seem so, no."

"I'll wrestle Flair anyway."

"Then it's my duty to tell you that we will get a restraining order forbidding you to wrestle anywhere but where we say. The NWA has agreed not to fight us on this matter. If necessary, a sheriff will be at the arena to prevent you

from wrestling."

"This isn't fair!"

"We're not concerned with fair. This is the law."

That's when the architecture of the dressing room was rearranged and the two WWA representatives fled. The destruction was taken from Race's purse the next night when he defended the WWA title.

Many believe Ric Flair remains NWA champ by the grace of the small print. □



# WRESTLING

# ENQUIRER

# MURACO TURNS RULEBREAKER, DECLARES ALLIANCE WITH PIPER

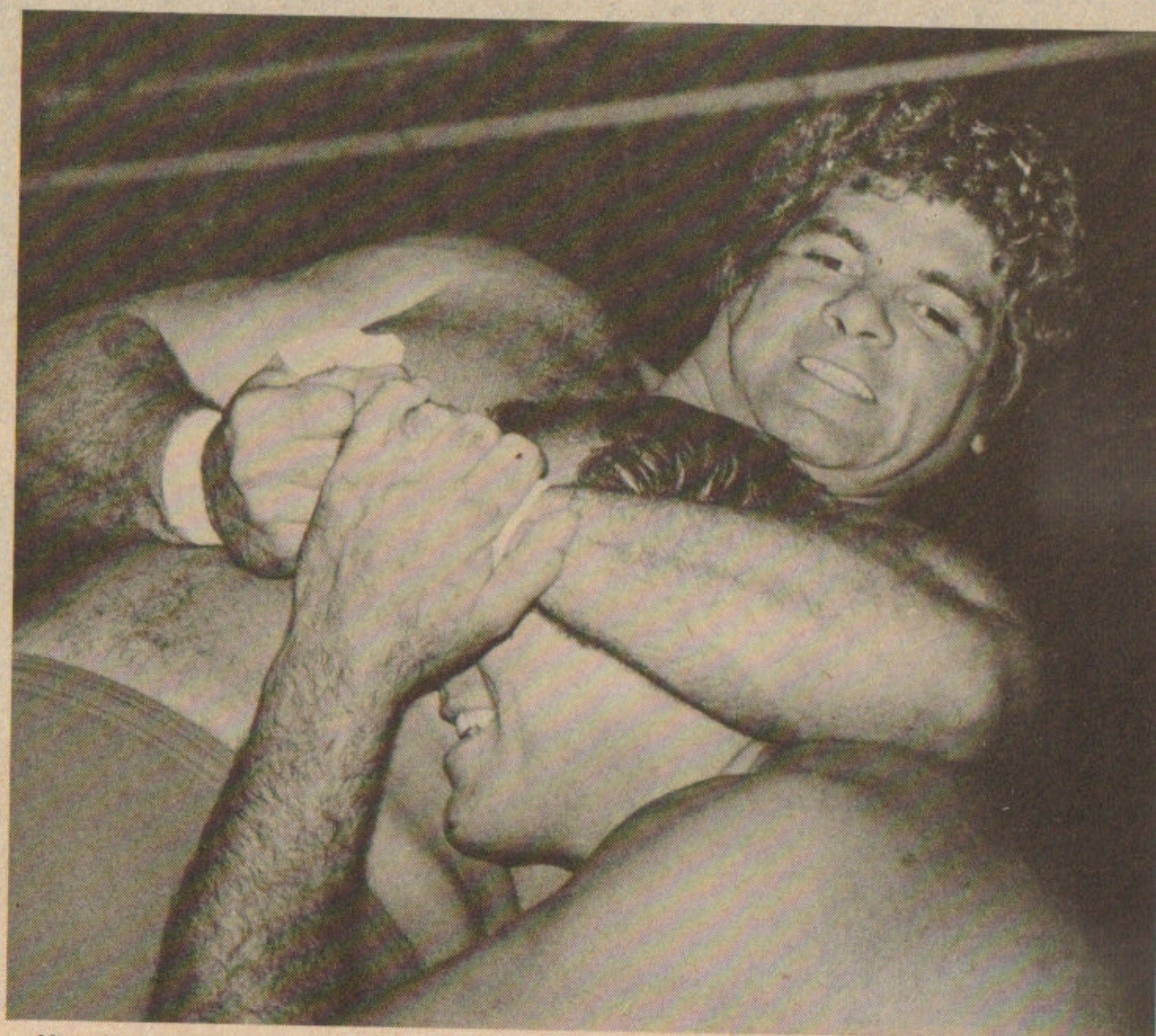
BY PETER KING

GREENSBORO, NC—Don "Magnificent" Muraco, who had won the Western Regional portion of the NWA tag team championship tournament along with Wahoo McDaniel, has turned rulebreaker again and declared his friendship with Roddy Piper.

During a recent match pitting

Piper against Mid-Atlantic champion Jack Brisco, Muraco ran to the ring and handed Piper a set of brass knuckles. Only the aid of Wahoo McDaniel was able to save the popular Brisco.

"I'm in this area to stay," said Muraco, "and I'm willing to give Piper all the help he needs to achieve his goals."



After a brief and successful period as a scientific wrestler, Magnificent Muraco has returned to a rulebreaking style.



## Gary Hart Teams Mystery Man With Kabuki

BY STU SAKS

DALLAS, TX—"His name is the Golden Dragon, and along with the Great Kabuki, these two Far Eastern masters of the mat art will take every tag team championship title there is."

With these words, controversial

manager Gary Hart announced the acquisition of another insidious charge, the Golden Dragon. Details are sketchy at this stage, but those who have seen the Dragon in action maintain that he could complement Kabuki's style quite well, and that a tag team comprised of these two men would be a formidable combination, indeed.

"It's only a matter of time," Hart added, "and then I will rule tag team wrestling with an iron hand."

## Wizard Unveils Playboy Buddy Rose

BY BILL APTER

NEW YORK, NY—Adding another significant name to his stable of "uncrowned champions," the Grand Wizard has brought Playboy Buddy Rose to the

WWF territory.

"The man has style, both in and out of the ring," said the Wizard, "and I like a man with style."

Rose, who has made a personal tradition of arriving at the ring escorted by two beautiful models, does, indeed, have style.

## Heenan Says Hulk Has Had Enough

BY CRAIG PETERS

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Bobby Heenan, manager of AWA Heavyweight champion Nick

Bockwinkel, has publicly stated that Hulk Hogan will never get another title shot at the champion.

"He's had enough," said Heenan, "and probably more than enough. How many shots does this guy expect before he's laughed out of the territory? He ought to go back to Hollywood to be a second-rate actor instead of a third-rate wrestler, which he is now."

Hogan was unavailable for comment.

## Sonny King Takes Over As Manager Of The Samoans



Sonny King has taken over the management of The Samoans from Scandor Akbar.

BY DAN SHOCKET

ATLANTA, GA—Sonny King has returned from a self-imposed exile following treatment for a "heart injury" and returned to the world of wrestling.

Now, instead of actively wrestling, King has decided to lend his ring expertise to the fabulous tag team of The Samoans, Afa and Sika.

King's management of the Samoans follows an unexplained exit by Skandor Akbar as manager of this exciting team. Previously, The Samoans were guided to the WWF tag team championship by Lou Albano.

## AROUND THE GLOBE

NEW ORLEANS, LA

For some strange reason, tension has been building between tag team partners Ted DiBiase and Junkyard Dog. The two seem very ill at ease with each other and fans fear these two fan favorites are becoming bitter enemies.

NEW YORK, NY

At a press conference, Blackjack Mulligan said that he will soon make an announcement concerning his son, Blackjack Jr. The content of Mulligan's statement, he says, will "stun everyone."

TOKYO, JAPAN

Giant Baba is readying himself for a very stiff challenge from Harley Race. Race is after Baba's Pacific Wrestling Federation title. "I am going to bring the belt back to the U.S.," Race promises.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Ray Stevens says he is here to rid the area of Ken Patera. Patera's manager, Bobby "The Brain" Heenan, tells us he has taught Patera a new hold that will turn Stevens into "a vegetable."

PHOENIX, AZ

Superstar Billy Graham is working out harder than ever, preparing to invade the WWF in the very near future. The former WWF champion is desperate to regain his past glory and take the belt from Bob Backlund.



# LOOKING AT...

## Matt Brock:



*The Destroyer credits his 13-year-old son, Richard, with keeping him young.*

ALL TOO OFTEN I wind up wasting these pages ranting and raving about some young turk or a crazed lunatic who doesn't know a suplex from a hole in the ground.

Frankly, I'm getting sick of them all. I don't know if it's the hot weather that's getting to me or whether I'm really getting fed up with so many of the young men on the mat scene today that some days it hardly seems worth getting up in the morning.

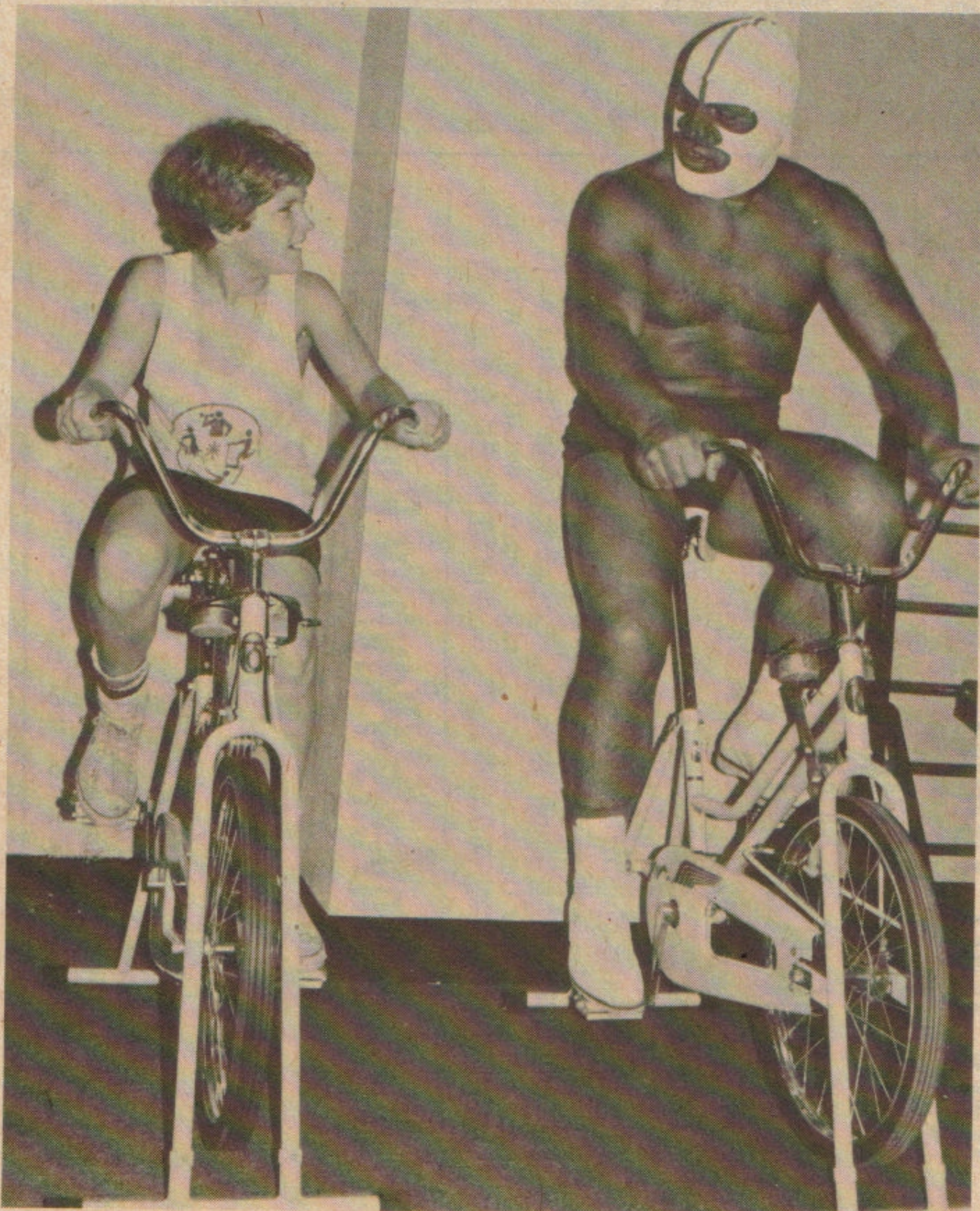
All I know is that there are days, and there never used to be so many of them, when I go to a wrestling card and I cringe when the ring announcer reels off the names.

Whatever happened to style, to grace, to the kind of wrestling that makes me sit on the edge of my seat and empathize with the man in the ring, makes me feel every bodyslam and squirm with every figure-four?

Whatever happened to the good old days?

They're alive and well and all because of The Destroyer.

It's been a while since I've seen this most underrated of superstars wrestle, though he still





# THE DESTROYER



maintains a grueling schedule of matches even after recently celebrating the 20th anniversary of his professional ring debut.

I remember it well. It was April 1962, and I was sitting at ringside. I'll never forget what the feeling was like that day.

This masked man came into the ring. I told myself, "Oh no, not another hooded clown. Why can't these guys just unmask and wrestle like everybody else? This guy has got to be a stiff."

What else could I think? After all, his mask wasn't flashy. His costume was plain, simple, not the kind of thing you would associate with a man who is looking to build a reputation, particularly on the occasion of his debut.

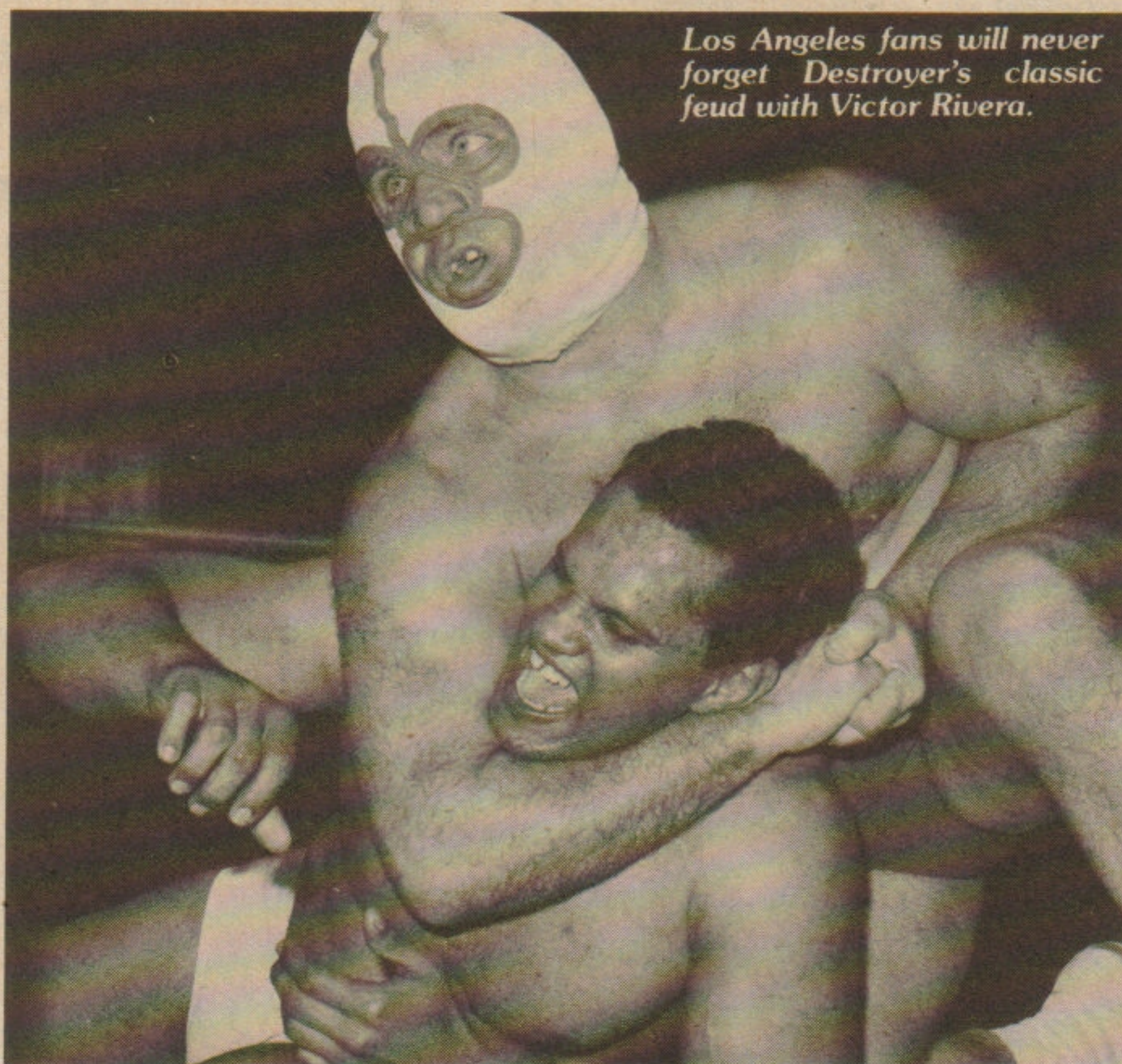
Then the bell rang and the match began. Let me tell you, friends, a 20-year younger Matt ate a lot of crow that night.

The Destroyer was amazing.

His wrestling style was like his mask: simple, not too flashy, direct... and extremely effective. And it still is.

Before this turns into a "Matt Brock Looking Back" column, let me update you on The Destroyer.

Three years ago he made an incredible tour of Japan, winning



*Los Angeles fans will never forget Destroyer's classic feud with Victor Rivera.*

over a new generation of fans who missed the pleasure of seeing this man in action during the '60s.

Now he wrestles in Canada—and in upstate New York along the Canadian border. Word has it that The Destroyer is planning another tour of Japan later this summer, and is going to be participating in the mat wars in Ger-

many in the late fall.

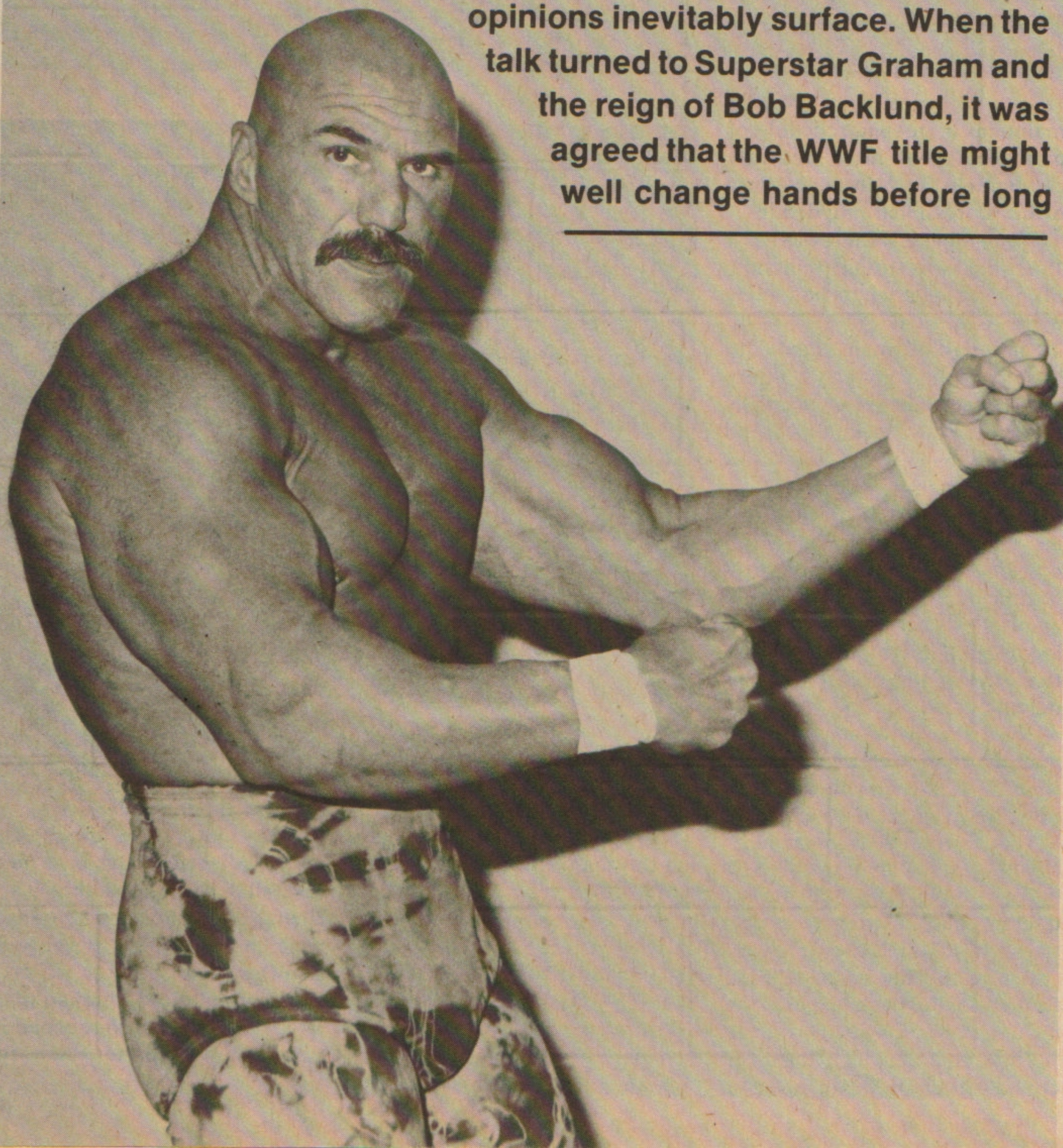
After that... who knows? The man is a legend in his own time, and all I can say is that it's a shame that a lot of the younger wrestling fans have never seen The Destroyer.

Congratulations, masked man, and let's hope that the second 20 years is even better than the first.



# *Why The Experts Predict . . .* **BACKLUND'S REIGN SUPERSTAR GRAHAM**

When the editors of a magazine like *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* gather together to discuss the ins and outs of the sport, strong opinions inevitably surface. When the talk turned to Superstar Graham and the reign of Bob Backlund, it was agreed that the WWF title might well change hands before long





# WILL END WHEN AM RETURNS

THERE ARE TIMES, in between the incessant deadlines of putting out a magazine like *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, when the editorial staff will get together and discuss issues and events in the sport.

One day it might be a meeting to examine the ramifications of an experiment like the NWA's 30-day trial period of no disqualifications

in title matches, and another day it could be a discussion of the performance of a particular grappler during a match seen the previous evening.

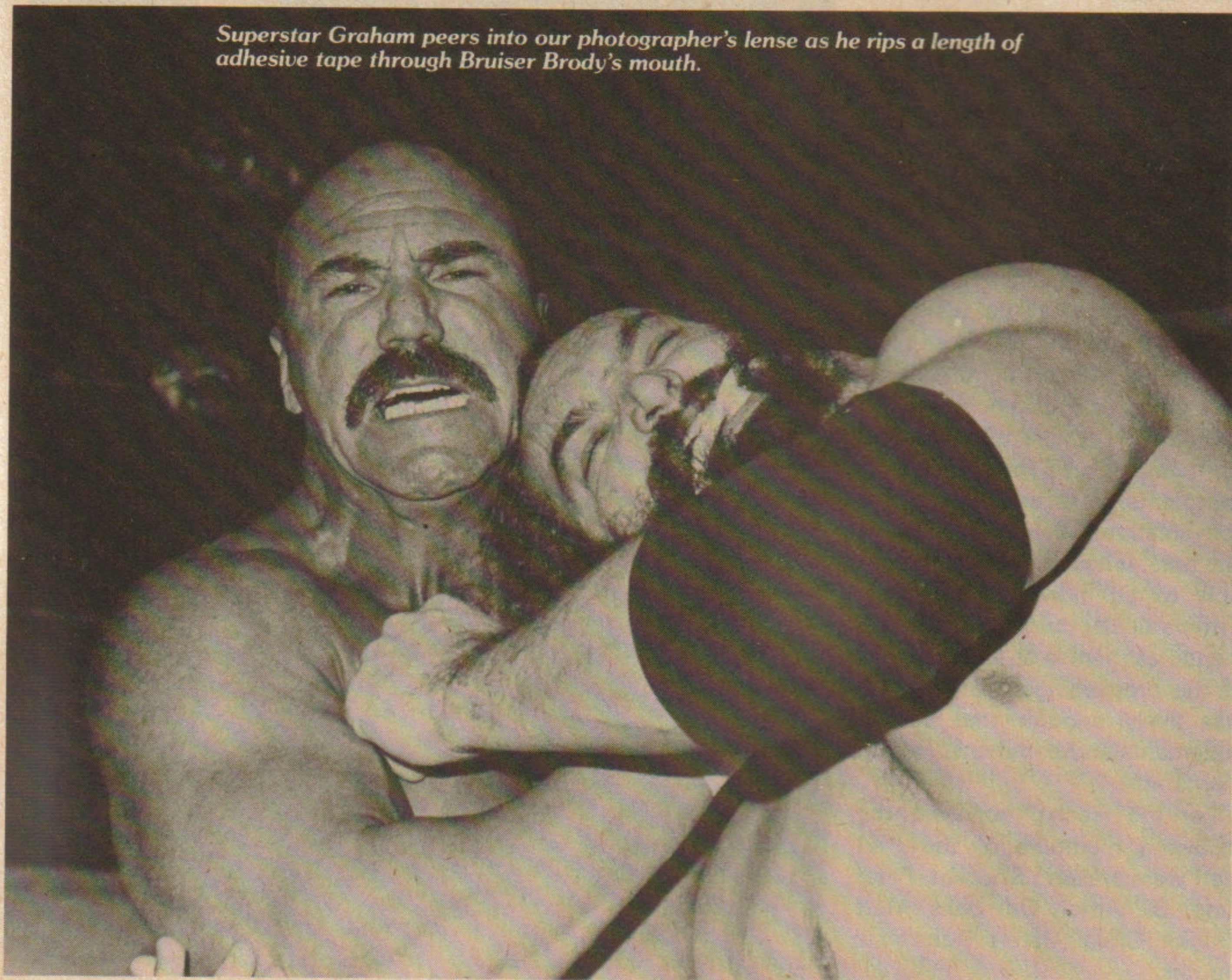
Recently, the editorial staff of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* met for a round table discussion on the championship reign of WWF heavyweight champion Bob Backlund.

The four-hour conversation centered primarily around his recent title defenses against Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka and his apparent unwillingness to defend the title against a scientific grappler.

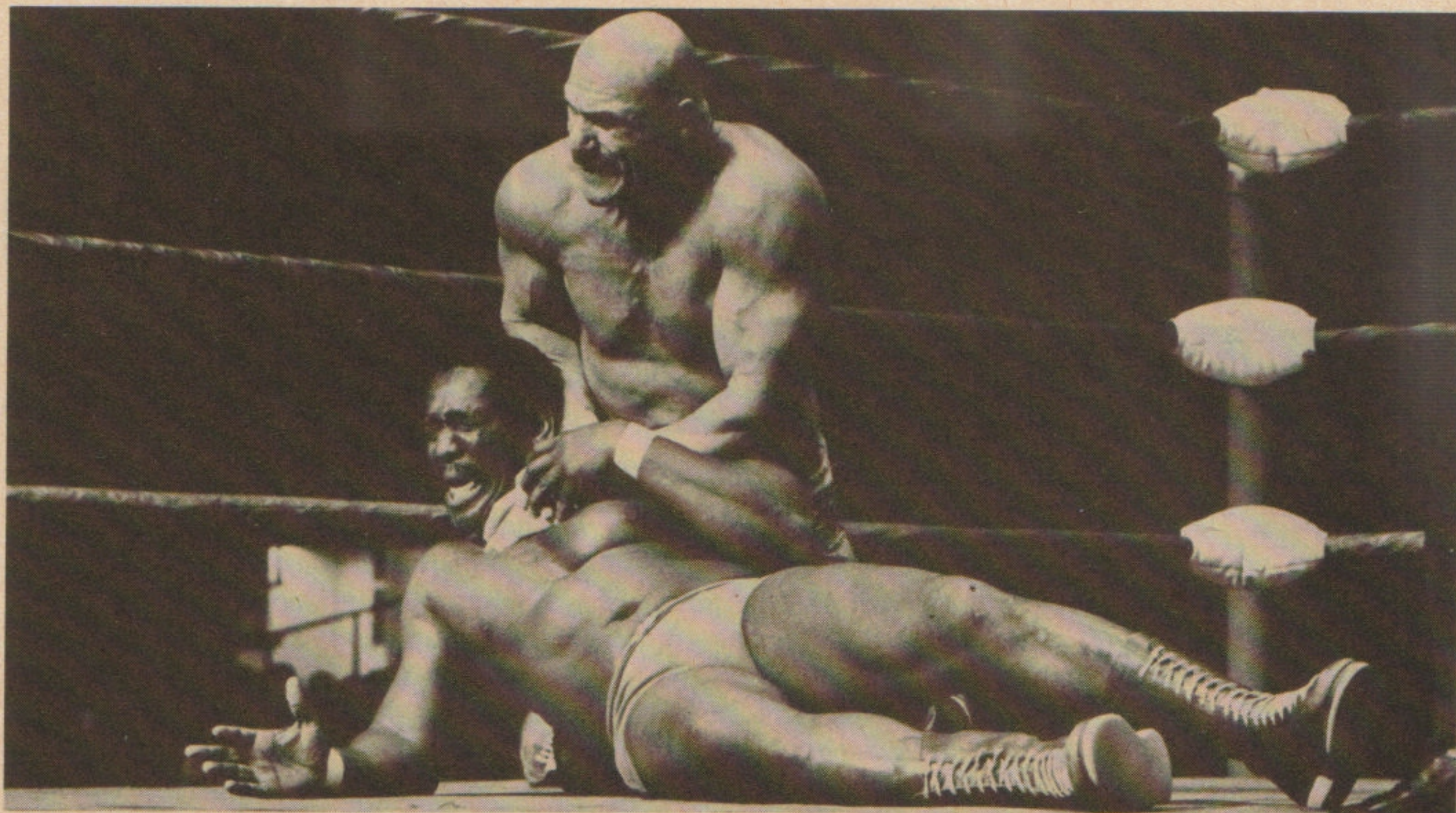
"You know, Superstar Graham is returning to the WWF," said Dan Shocket.

The assembled editors sat in

*Superstar Graham peers into our photographer's lense as he rips a length of adhesive tape through Bruiser Brody's mouth.*







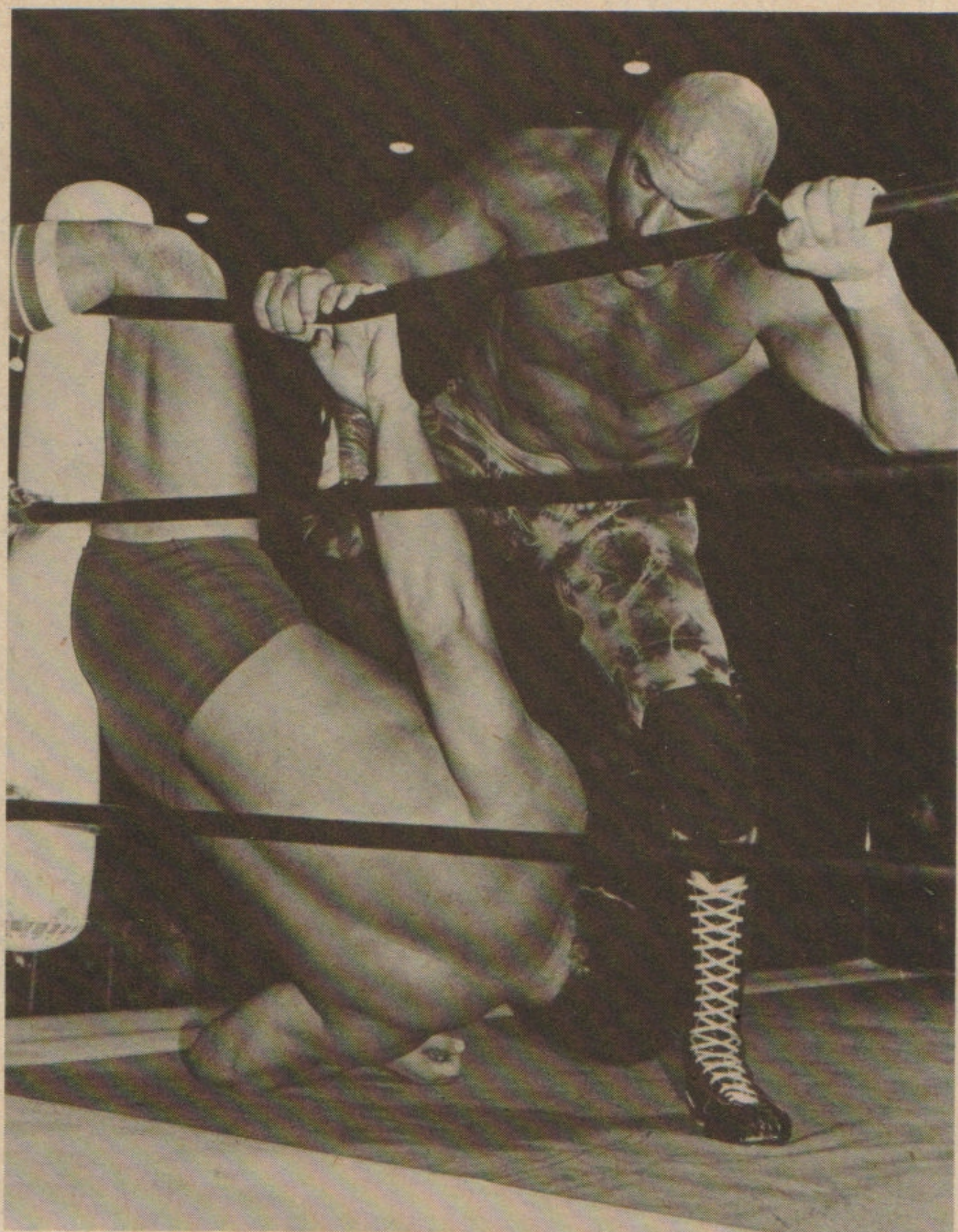
*Graham, who openly admits his lack of regard for the rulebook, wraps his hands around the windpipe of S.D. Jones (above) and relentlessly knees Tiger Toguchi, who is draped helplessly upside down in the corner (right).*

silence.

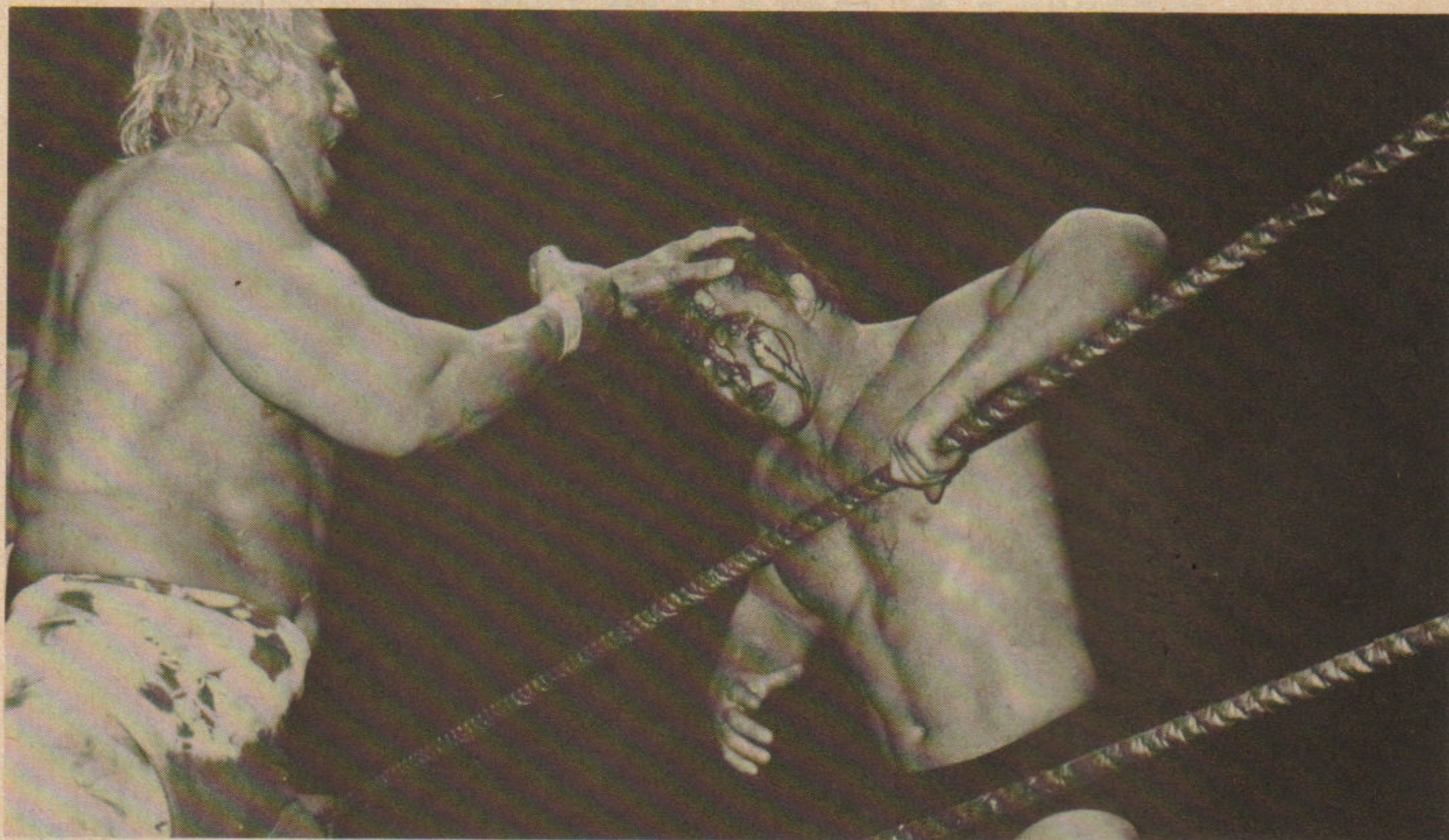
"That's going to be the end of Backlund," Shocket said. "Once Graham returns, he's going to want revenge for the way that Backlund took the title from him. He's going to want his title back. He's going to succeed."

Suddenly, the entire editorial staff was off on a frantic series of arguments. It seemed as if six conversations were going on at one time. It became almost impossible to tie individual names in with particular opinions and statements, as there is no taped record of the proceedings. But the talk was lively enough that certain statements and comments remain memorable.

For the record, however, the following members of the *PW* staff were present: Shocket, Peter King, Bill Apter, Stu Saks, Matt Brock, Craig Peters, and Liz Hunter.







*Graham tries to widen the cut on Bob Backlund's forehead during one of their several rematches after Backlund took Graham's WWF belt on a controversial pin. Backlund has not wrestled Graham in four years, but the hatred between them has not dwindled.*

The high points of the debate went something like this:

"I saw Graham wrestle in California against S.D. Jones, and it was like he never spent any time away from wrestling at all," Peters said. "He was as strong as ever, if not appearing to be in the best shape of his career."

It is widely known that S.D. Jones is a very good friend of Bob Backlund's.

"Not only against Jones, who Graham practically destroyed, by the way, probably because he knew that he's a good friend of Backlund's, but also against Bruiser Brody in Japan," Peters added.

"Brody is one of the toughest men in the sport," said Hunter.

"That's right," Peters said, "and he was strong against Brody. Almost as strong as against S.D. Jones and probably stronger than against Tiger Toguchi in Japan."

There was silence. The point

had been established: Graham was wrestling at the peak of his form, perhaps better than ever before in his career.

"But let's consider this," mentioned Matt Brock. "Superstar Graham's foot was resting on the rope when Bob Backlund scored his so-called 'victory' and took the WWF belt. I wouldn't exactly call that a clean win, and you can bet that if and when Graham returns to the WWF, and if and when he gets another shot with Backlund, that he's going to make sure the referee in that match keeps a close eye on where the ropes are, and where everyone's feet are."

"What about the fact that Backlund has defended his title for over four years against some of the most ruthless men in the business?" asked Saks. "Everyone seems to forget about that when they talk about how bad Backlund is, but it's just a matter of his being a low-key guy. He doesn't scream on interviews, he

doesn't boast about himself, he's a very down to earth kind of guy. So people think he's weak, when in fact he's probably the strongest champion in the entire sport."

"That can work against him," King said, "because Graham is no dummy. He knows that Backlund is strong, he's been paying close attention to him over the past four years, and he's probably got every one of Backlund's weak spots pinpointed. I think Graham is going to take the title away from Backlund when he returns."

"I have to agree," said Brock. "Backlund's days as titleholder are definitely numbered."

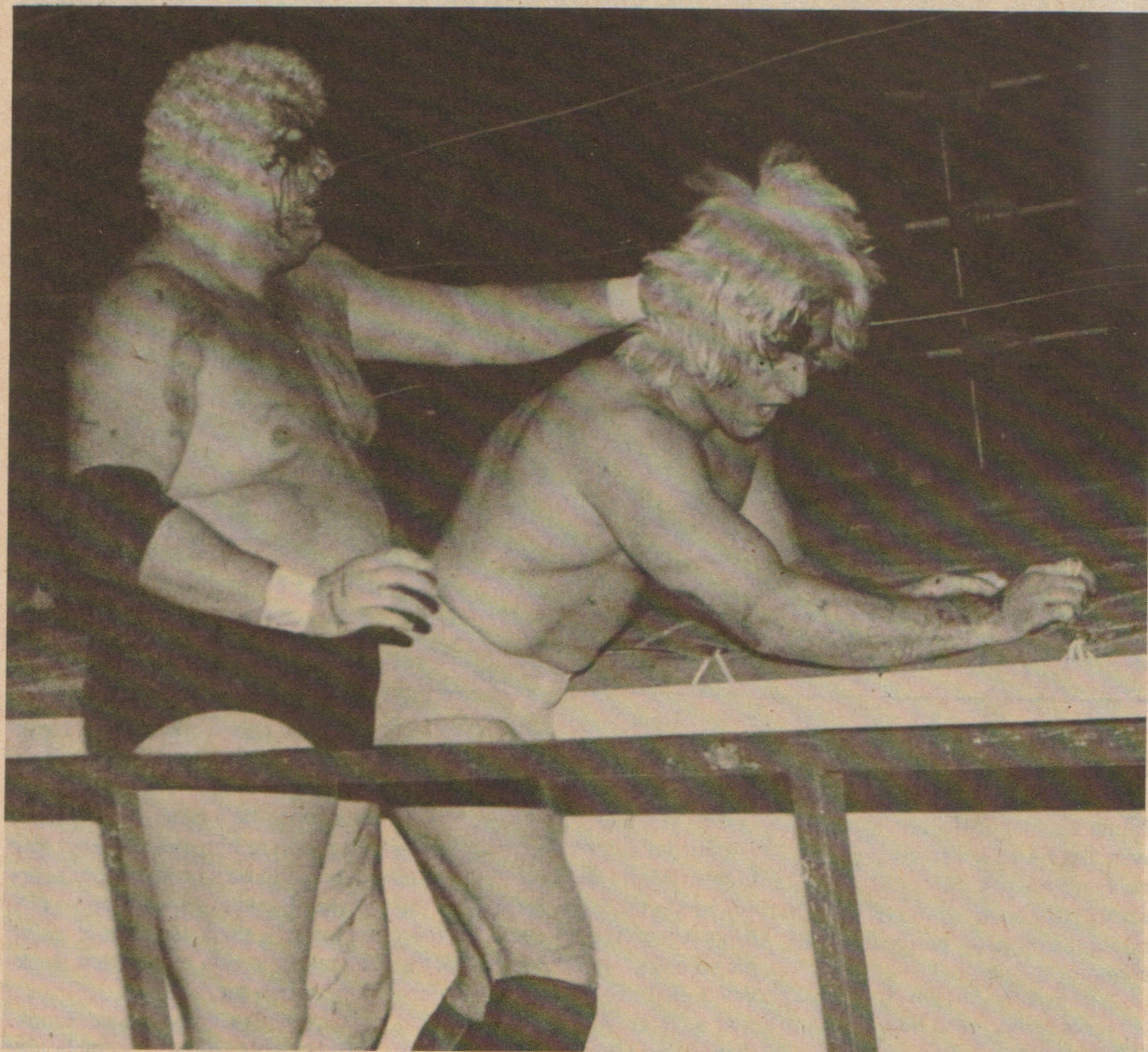
"With an impartial referee and with Graham studying Backlund and all his weak points, I also have to agree," said Hunter. "Graham is not a washed up old man or a young, inexperienced idiot. He'll win the title again."

A few minor dissenting comments failed to reverse the opinion of the group as a whole: Should the time come when Backlund must again meet Superstar Graham within the squared circle, it could very well be the end of his championship. □



## Ric Flair

(Continued from Page 34)



*Though Flair seems to be changing his ways of late, most experts feel that the lifestyle he has maintained over the years will affect him as time goes by. Flair's battles with Dusty Rhodes are physically and mentally draining.*

So he worked. His body stretched and strained. Muscles most men don't even know exist had to be tempered and tested. Along with his physical development, Flair's mental concentration was intense. He studied how every motion felt, cataloguing which movements were most graceful and powerful. Nothing was left to chance. He was protecting his title.

After the workout, a friend

came by and invited him to a party. There was promise of wine, women and song. Instantly, Flair's face lit up. One could see him imagining the evening's entertainment. Then, just as suddenly, his face dropped. He told his friend that he couldn't make it. He had to be in early that night. There was a big match a few days ahead. The disappointed friend said he understood and added maybe next time. Flair knew there

would be no next time as long as he held the belt.

That night, Flair ate a modest and healthy dinner, went to the movies alone, and then went to bed. He never used to go to the movies. He used to say, "I have my own adventures. I don't need someone to have adventures for me."

At times, Flair claims he hates the title. At other times, he knows he can't live without it. □

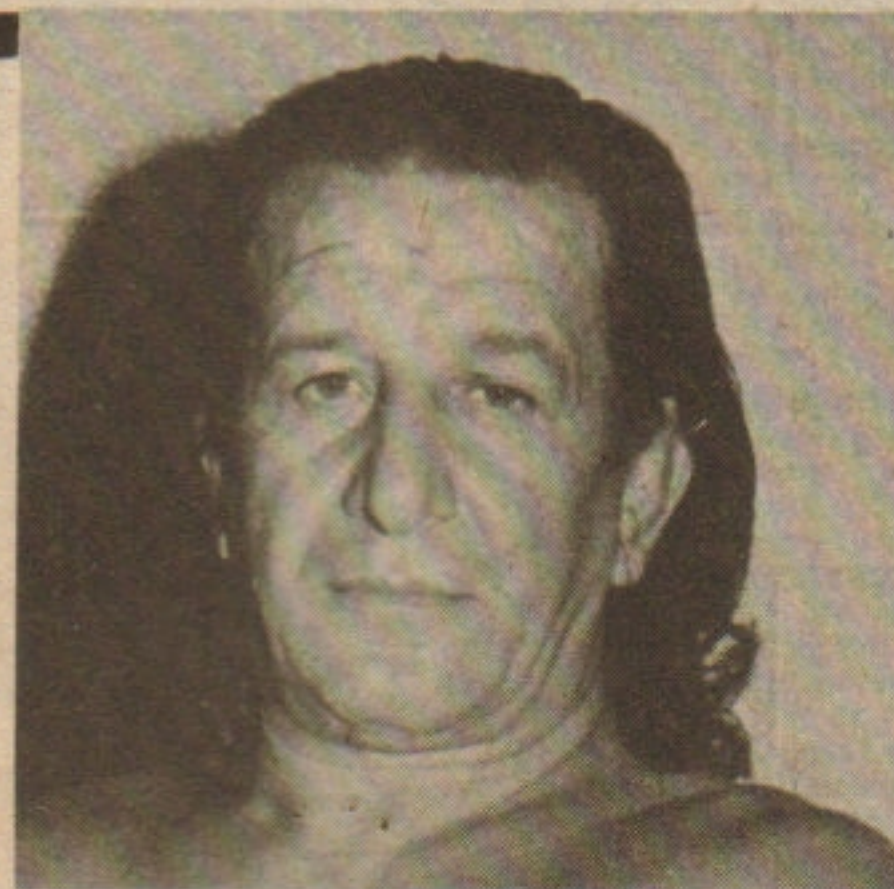


# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29)

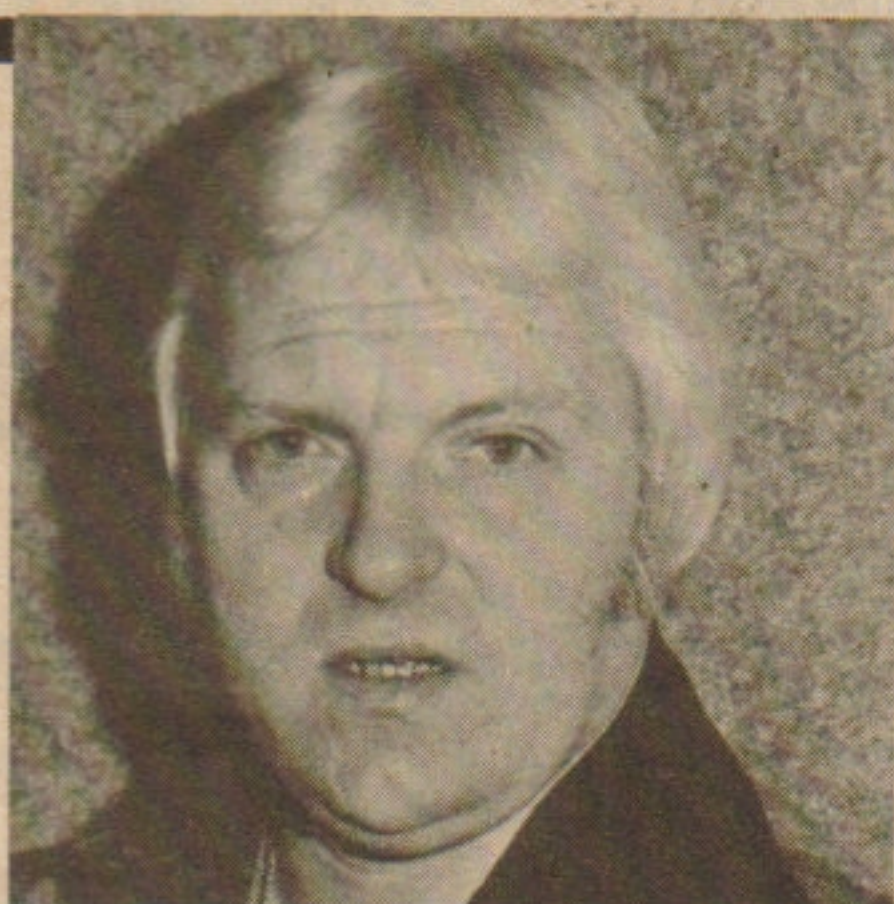
## CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW

"It was the proudest day of my life when I stepped into that Madison Square Garden ring with my brother, Jules. To be in a tag team with Jules is the realization of a dream that I have had for years, and I know from talking with him that Jules feels the same way. Fuji and Saito had better watch out."



## BOBBY HEENAN

"I don't mind wrestling idiots like Junkyard Dog. Why not? I have nothing to lose. I know I'll win, and the Dog will just come away from the meeting looking ridiculous. Besides, I have more important things to worry about, like making sure that Nick [Bockwinkel] is in top condition for every one of his matches."



## GINO HERNANDEZ

"The only reason everyone is so down on me is because they are all jealous. They're jealous of my fantastic good looks, they're jealous of the fact that I party with all the superstars of show business, and they're jealous of my wrestling abilities. Well, that's just too bad for them!"



## ARNOLD SKOALAND

"I train with Bobby [Backlund] every day, we travel together, and I can attest to the fact that he's been training harder for his matches against Jimmy Snuka than anyone else over the past four years. He was worried about the challenge, but the worry has turned into work, and that's what makes a champion great."





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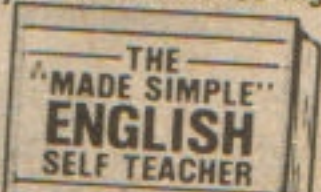
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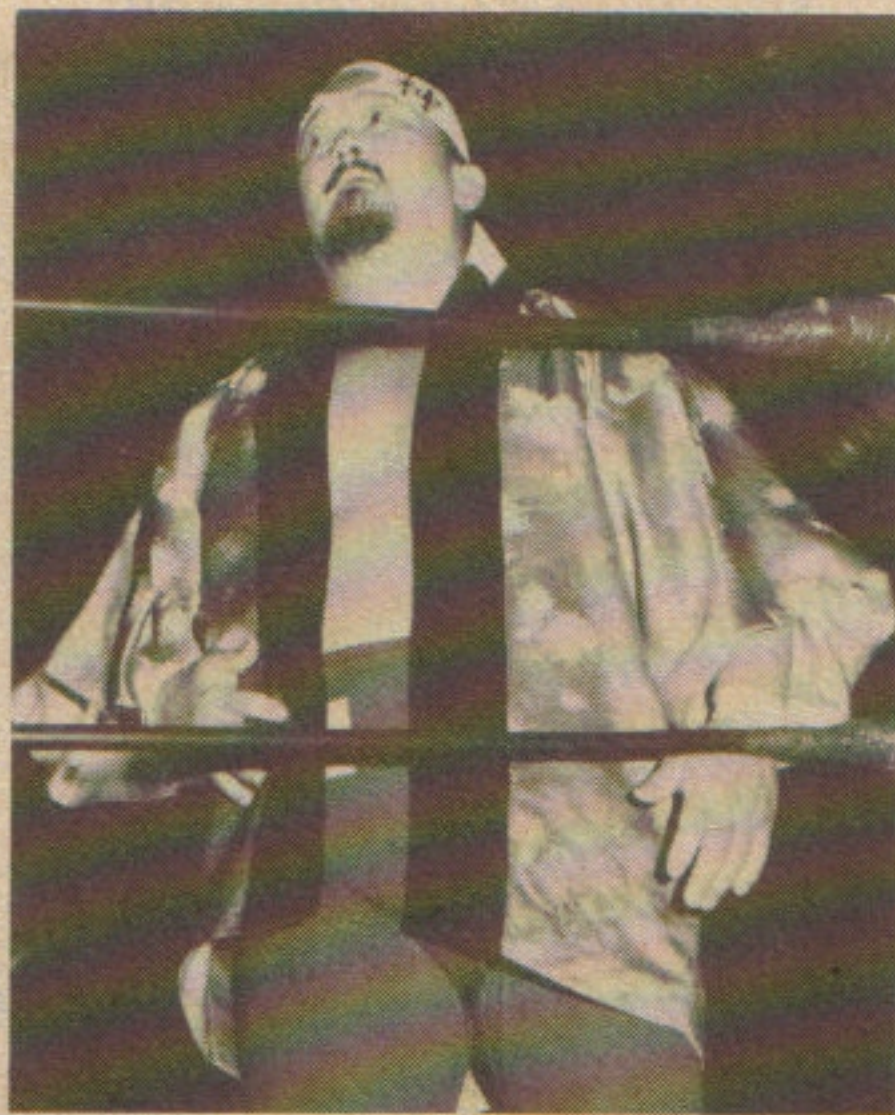
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## King's Court

(Continued from Page 6)



Choosing not to risk the WWF tag team title, Albano split up Mr. Fuji (above) and Mr. Saito for one night.

above him in the ratings. So Saito was forced to wrestle Putski. Just like Fuji had to sign to meet Morales later tonight. Look, going in, I'm sure Lou told his guys not to worry. Albano could sustain two losses tonight, one each by Saito and Fuji, and he still comes out managing the tag team champs. It's great, great strategy."

Sure enough, Mr. Fuji also went down to defeat as Pedro Morales turned back the Japanese's challenge. A loss is a loss, I thought, but Bobby Davis disagreed.

"It was a good loss," he claimed. "Pedro was on the run. Without doubt, Fuji discovered a few weaknesses in Morales tonight. Next month, Morales will defend that Intercontinental belt against Bobby Orton Jr. You know, I managed Orton Jr.'s dad some years ago. And just by watching Fuji against Morales, I saw some fatal flaws in Pedro's style. As did Lou. As did Grand Wizard. Tonight, the three of us will get together and discuss this match. And next month, Orton will enter this ring prepared and ready. Morales is doomed."

Now it was time for the main event: Snuka vs. Backlund in a

fiery rematch. In their first encounter, Snuka won a controversial decision, injuring Backlund's ribs in the process. Everyone in the Garden expected Snuka to charge out quickly and work over Backlund's still sore ribcage. Everyone except Bobby Davis.

"Perfect strategy," Davis said as Snuka avoided making contact with Backlund's ribcage. "Backlund's expecting to be hit in the ribs. All of his defense was prepared with this in mind. I'll bet he and Skoaland worked 80, no, maybe 90, percent on ribcage defense. Albano knew this and told Snuka to lay off the ribs. For a little while, anyway."

Ten minutes into the match, Bobby Davis jumped to his feet, shook me by the shoulder, and pointed into the ring. "Look, it's happened!" he yelled. "Backlund's no longer protecting his ribs. He feels Snuka won't go after them. What a rube. Watch Snuka now!"

Before Davis could even finish his thought, Snuka threw a hard right followed by a headbutt into Backlund's ribcage. The champion screamed in agony. The match had begun to turn around.

The bout ended with Backlund counted outside the ring, bleeding and barely conscious. Another win for Snuka, though Backlund still retained the belt. What's next, I wondered.

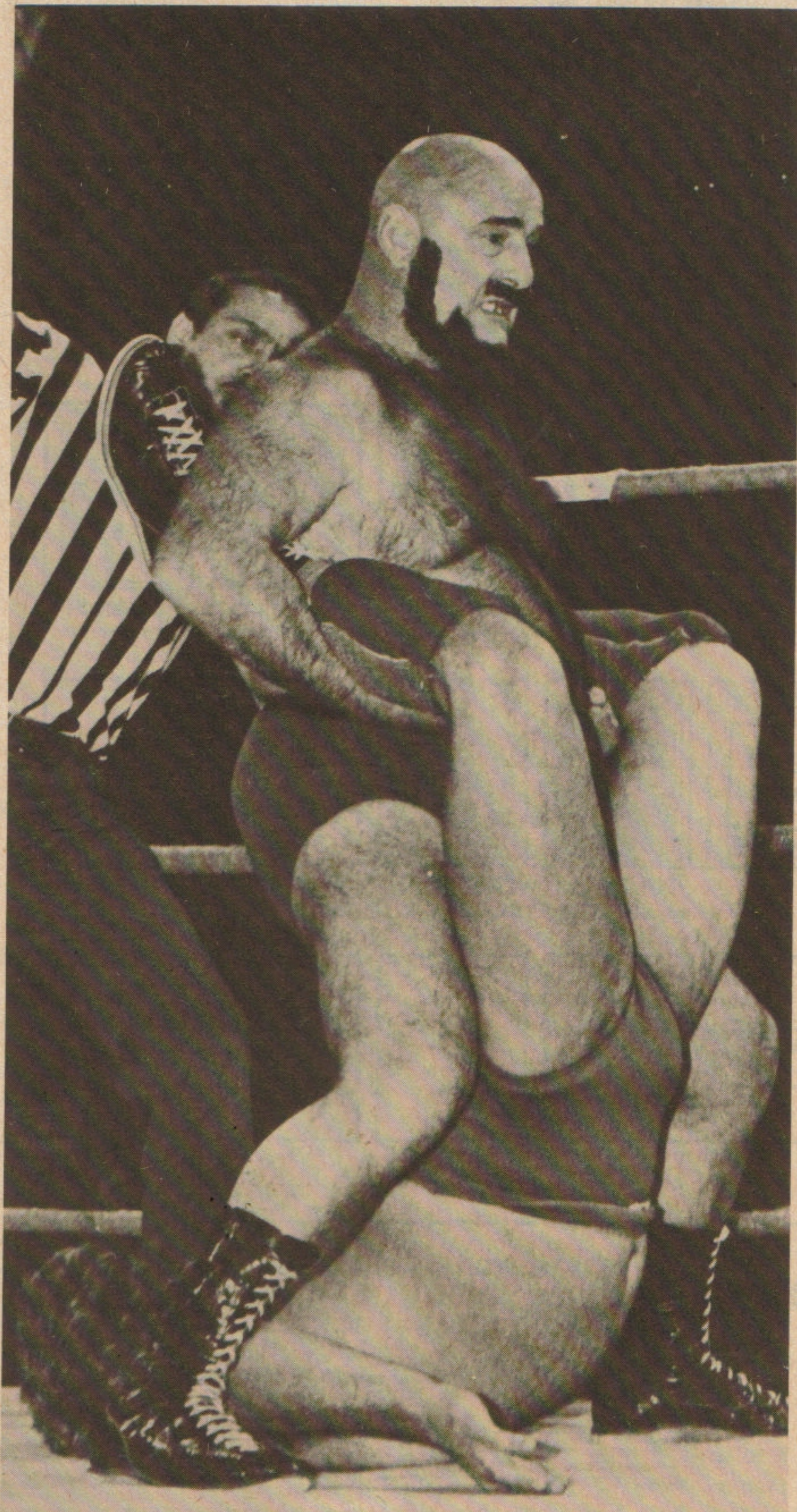
"I'll tell you what's next," said Davis, as if reading my mind. "Right now, Lou Albano is running amok in the dressing room, demanding a rematch, probably Texas Death. No, knowing Lou, he won't settle for anything less than the steel cage. Wait and see."

About 15 minutes later, the ring announcer told the SRO crowd at the Garden about next month's card. The main event? Snuka vs. Backlund. In a steel cage, of course. □

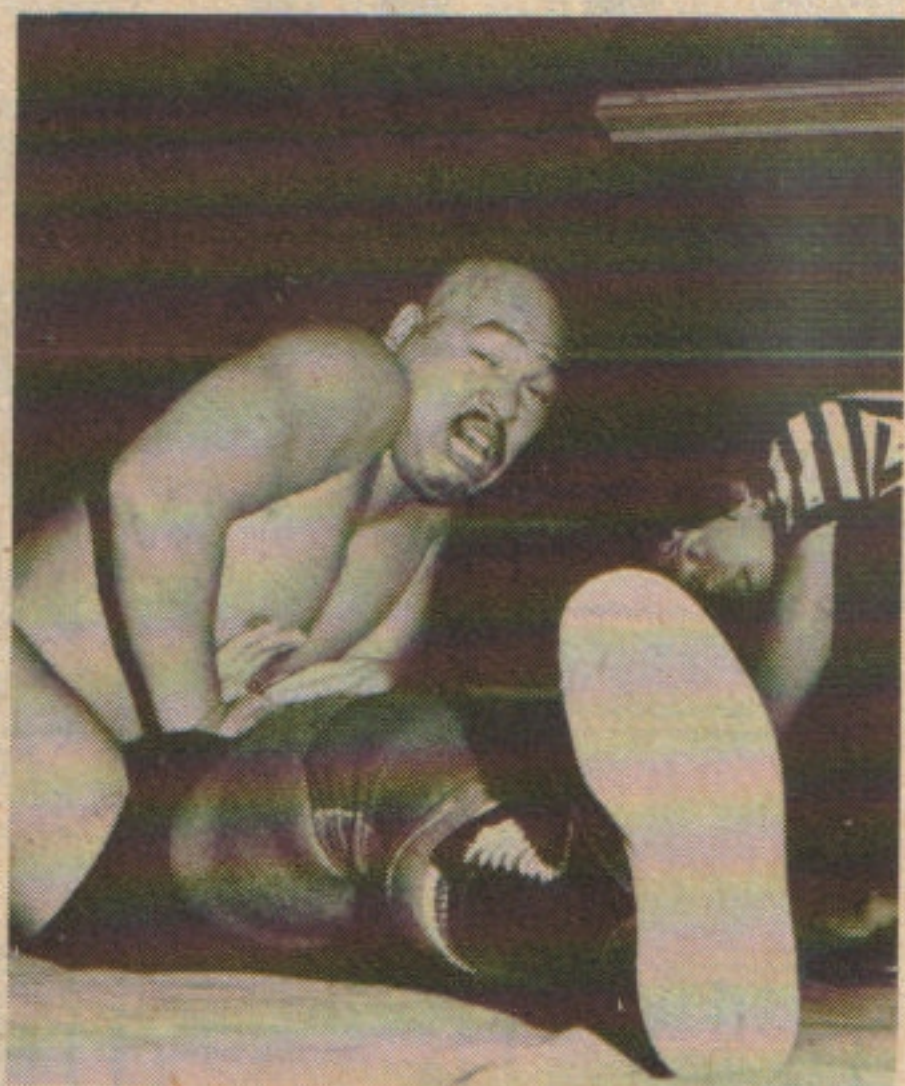


## Ringside

(Continued from Page 8)



*Mad Dog Vachon, absent from the AWA for several months while recuperating from injuries suffered in a sneak-attack by Crusher Blackwell, has returned with a vengeance.*



*Killer Khan has terminated his relationship with Al Hays and is negotiating to wrestle in Louisiana.*

Backlund's title. It's my plan and I am *sure* it will work. Heed my words."

Young Matt Borne is now a manager as well as a wrestler. He is guiding the tag team of Rip Oliver and Dizzy Hogan...Privates Nelson and Kernodle have lost the Mid-Atlantic tag team belts to Porkchop Cash and King Parson...The Golden Dragon, a martial arts expert, is the newest member of Gary Hart's army. Hart intends to team him with Kabuki. "They'll be the greatest tag team in history—and the most vicious!" he says.

Outlaw Ron Bass is being cheered by Tennessee fans now that he is feuding with Hussein "Iron Sheik" Arab...The Samoans are in Georgia and Sonny King has taken over their managerial duties...Colonel Buck Robley has purchased the contract of The Mongolian Stomper for Texas bouts.

Mad Dog Vachon is back in the AWA after a lengthy absence. If you recall, Vachon was hospitalized after being injured in a sneak attack by Crusher Blackwell some time last year. Now that he is back, the Mad Dog is gunning



for revenge... Buddy Colt, a one-time wrestler who currently works as an NWA referee, was the victim of an ugly assault by Derek Draper in Florida. It seems that Colt once trained Brian Blair, Draper's enemy, and Draper thought it would be "fun" to see Colt suffer a little for helping Blair along. Nice guy, eh?

Mark Romero and Mike George, a newly formed combination, have really hit it big. They are the new Central States tag team kings after a spectacular upset over Roger Kirby and Jerry Brown... James J. Dillon is bringing Singapore's Tengu to Florida to team with Kendo Nagasaki. Tengu was trained by Nagasaki.



*Avalanche Tyler seeks revenge against former manager Sir Oliver Humperdink.*

Dory Funk Jr. has regained the International title belt he lost to Butch Reed. "I proved his victory was a fluke," Funk boasts... Buzz "Avalanche" Tyler is out to get his former manager, Sir Oliver Humperdink. "He tried to pull some fast ones on me," Tyler claims. "He still owes me a few thousand dollars for matches I won under his banner. He says I don't deserve the dough. I say he'll be a very sorry man very shortly. Watch your back Humperdink. I'm out to get you any way I can."

That's all for now. See you at the matches. ☐



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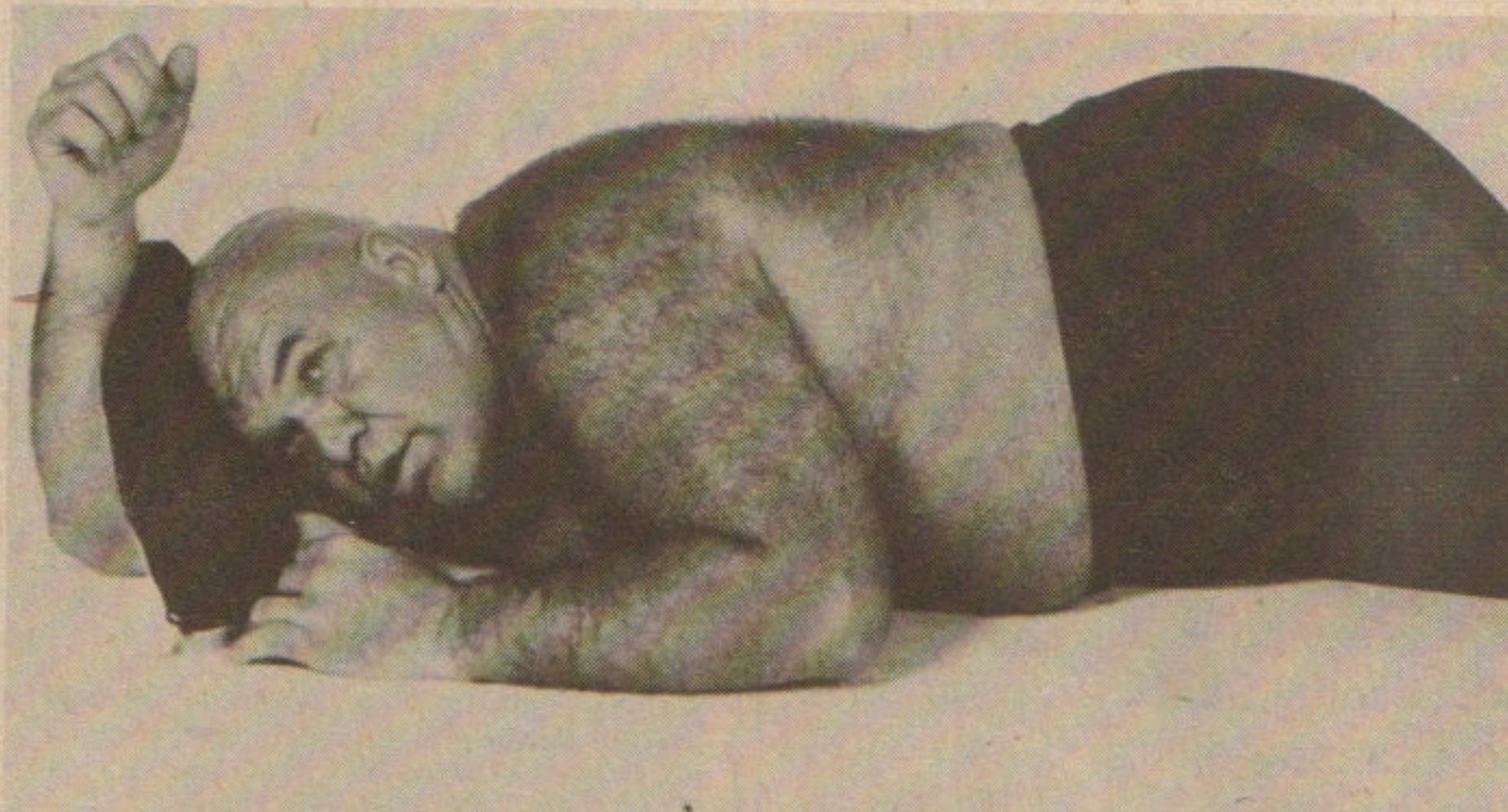
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## On Assignment

(Continued from Page 10)



*Various photographs of "The Animal" bring serious questions about his ability to deal with the outside world. The proof of his insanity, however, lies in the ring where he has devastated almost every wrestler he has faced.*



It's a private institution and it costs, as one doctor admits, "more money a month than most people make in a year." Certainly, some of Steele's income is used to pay for his care, but it isn't nearly enough. The doctors won't say who is paying, of course, but sources inside the WWF, AWA, and NWA offices say that the commissions are footing part of the bill. If that's so, wrestling deserves to be congratulated.

The day they released Steele was warm and sunny. There was very little ceremony involved; patients who leave at regular intervals know the routine by heart. Steele's eyes, however, betrayed his excitement. There was also something else there. If one didn't know Steele, one might think it is fear of the outside world.

The doctors told Steele that he should be able to live with society for a short time at least. He was scheduled to leave from Boston's Logan Airport to wrestle in Puerto Rico. Steele, who loves Puerto Rico, was relatively calm and walked out of the institution's gates a happy man.

I went with Steele from the institution to the airport. I hailed a cab, and the driver was a bit upset when he saw my companion. He didn't drive away, but warned, "Lady, you're responsible for that guy. He messes up my cab and you pay." I accepted his generous terms.

The ride to the airport was uneventful, perhaps because the driver was speeding so quickly that there was no time for anything to occur. Still, George was relatively calm. He spent the entire trip looking out the window, much like a wild animal searching the horizon for a feared enemy. For a man like Steele, the entire world is that enemy. He fights it with his rage and



madness. The most he can achieve is a momentary victory, but he is forced to accept those terms. It's strange to realize that he's twice my size and probably 10 times my strength, but the world I live in easily is more than he can tolerate.

The institution doesn't look like a place where the mentally deranged are separated from society. It's a beautiful estate with lush and perfectly groomed gardens, large and airy rooms that would make anyone feel comfortable, and a staff that is alert without being obvious.



We got to the airport and the cabby speeded off. We stood in front of the terminal and a skycap took George's bags—carefully. A cool wind was blowing in from the shore and people were beginning to don jackets and sweaters. Steele didn't seem to notice.

At the ticket reservations desk, George asked for a window seat on the plane. None was available. He appeared as if ready to throw a fit, but controlled himself. The woman behind the desk, visibly shaken, got him an aisle seat.

George walked to the gate, sat down and stared out the window. He was motionless. When it was time to board, he headed toward the door without saying goodbye. As he entered the passageway, he stopped as if to turn around, but didn't. Then he was gone. ☐

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## In Focus

(Continued from Page 12)

### TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME

It's good to see two brothers reunited for an event that both have been looking forward to for years.

I'm speaking, of course, about the return of Chief Jay Strongbow to WWF territory. Chief Jay, along with his brother, Jules, are tag teaming in squared circles all across the Northeast, and the fans' reactions have been overwhelmingly favorable.

But their recent Madison Square Garden debut high-

lighted a style of grappling that very well could earn them the WWF tag team championship. Jules and Jay appeared extremely strong against Jesse Ventura and Adrian Adonis, and they have placed the current champions, Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito, on notice.

"Those cheating devils had better beware," said Jules in a recent interview, "because my brother and I are going to be bringing the belts on home again."

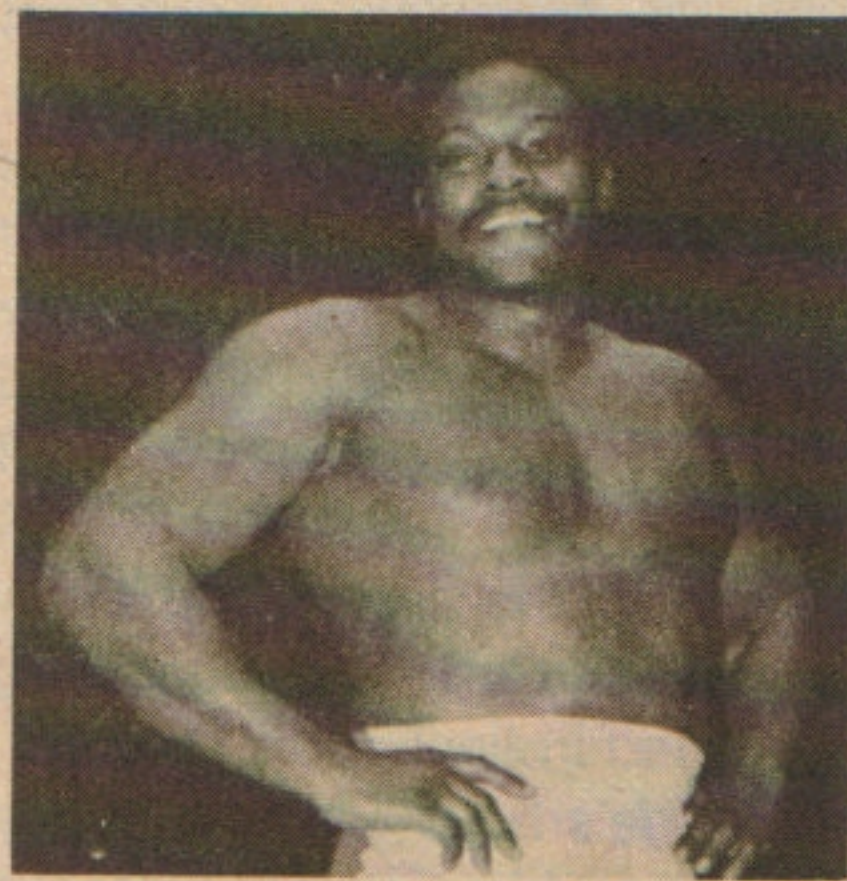
### SWEET TASTE OF VICTORY

Sweet Brown Sugar is enjoying the sweet taste of success—and the pride of wearing a championship belt around his waist.

A tournament was recently held in the Bahamas to determine the champion of the area. It was a brutal contest that stretched over many weeks, but in the end it was Sweet Brown Sugar who emerged victorious and became the new Bahamas champion.

"I am happy to have won the tournament," said Sugar, "and

I hope to hold the title for a long time. I intend to defend the belt against any and all challengers."



SWEET BROWN SUGAR

### OFFICIAL ATTACK

Referees in Florida are having a hard time these days.

According to PW/ West Palm Beach correspondent T.G. Nathan, attacks on officials have become particularly vicious lately.

"Tommy Young has been roughed-up several times," writes Nathan, "and in attempting to break an illegal hold by one of the wrestlers was thrown out of the ring and onto the concrete floor. In no

other sport is such meager respect for officials shown, and if wrestling is to survive, the officials should have the authority to suspend and fine any grappler who puts a hand on him.

"Officials do not have the strength to survive such attacks," Nathan adds, "and they could become permanently disabled."

This column invites comments from readers on this vital subject. ☐



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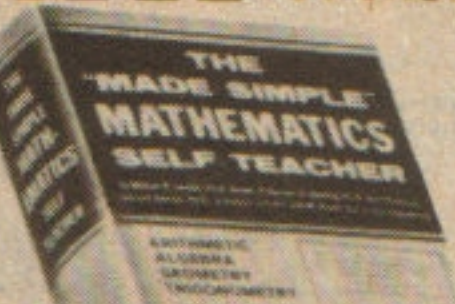
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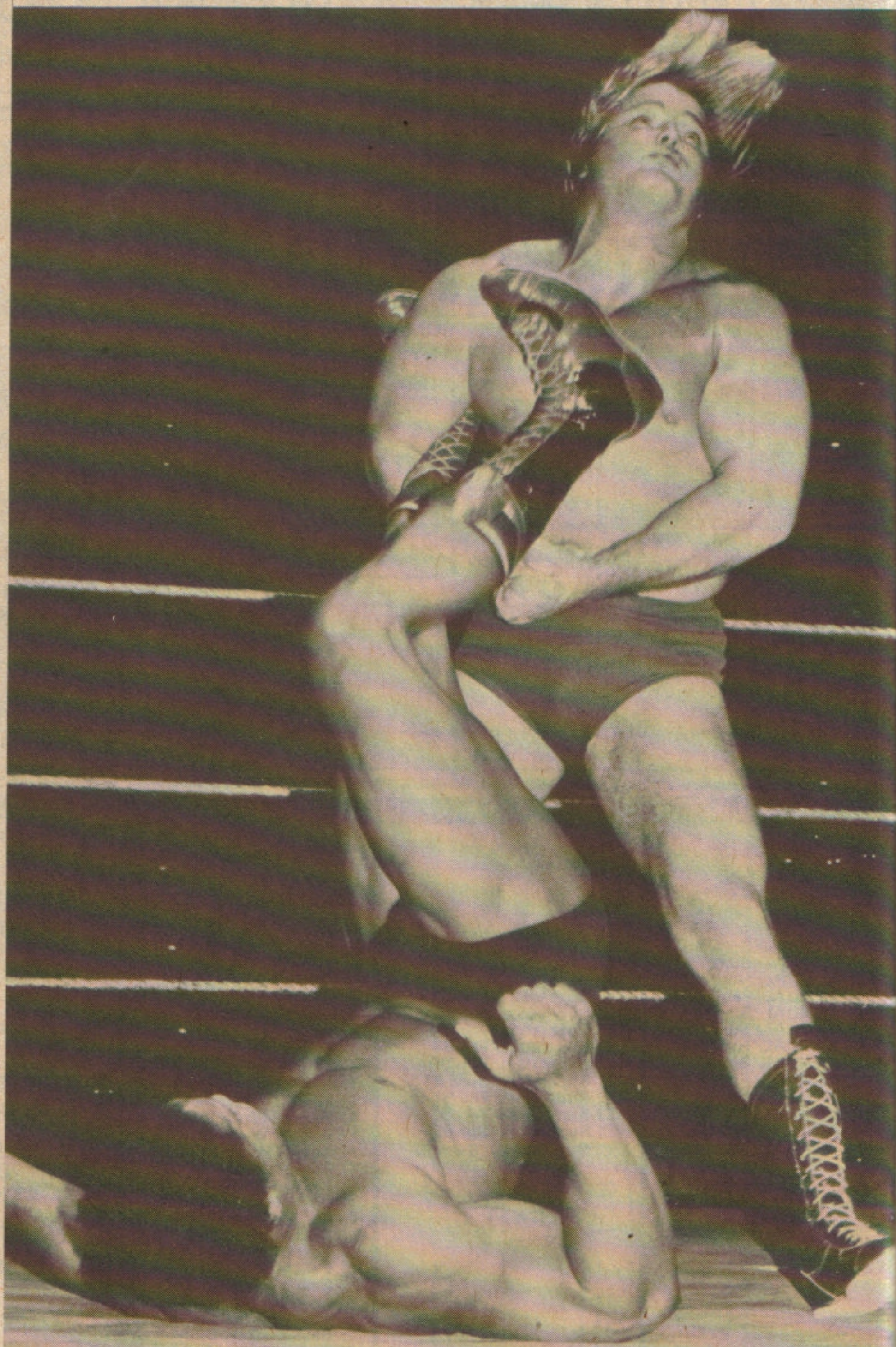


## Dressing Room Confidential

(Continued from Page 18)

top-notch, and I get a kick out of the announcers' unique bilingual call. One announcer speaks in Spanish, one speaks in English, and it doesn't seem like either understands or even cares what the other is saying.

When six o'clock rolls around, you can take the apple pie out of the oven. You can't get more American than Gordon Solie. *Georgia Championship Wrestling*, broadcast over Ted Turner's Superstation, WTBS, reaches a



Tony Atlas and Greg Valentine battle in one of the many main-event caliber matches at Madison Square Garden.



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larger audience than any other television wrestling show in the nation. If you can put up with the annoying Roddy Piper, GCW is about as entertaining as two hours of television can be. (A little sidelight: According to a representative of TBS, *Georgia Championship Wrestling* is second only to Atlanta Braves baseball in the station's ratings, reaching 1.5 million homes across the nation.)

I had just enough time to heat up a bowl of chicken soup before the start of the Madison Square Garden card at 8:30. The Garden cards are also broadcast to the nation, via the U.S.A. cable network. Watching this superb card on television was nice, but very little compares to the raw emotion that only 22,000 screaming New Yorkers can create in person.

The Garden show ended at 11:00, and the WWF's other weekly televised show, *Championship Wrestling* came on at midnight. At that point I was pretty tired, but I couldn't go to sleep. I was running the Television Wrestling Marathon and I couldn't quit in the stretch.

I'm glad I didn't. After a couple of matches, the television station switched to a "live remote" from Madison Square Garden, where Vince McMahon conducted heated interviews with Captain Lou Albano, Arnold Skoaland, and Bob Backlund. All three confirmed what had been announced just before the conclusion of the Garden card: Snuka and Backlund would meet three weeks later at the Garden in a steel cage, with Backlund's title on the line.

I don't think I stayed awake for one minute after Vince McMahon and Pat Patterson signed off the air. I awoke in a cold sweat at 4:30 in the morning after having a nightmare. All I can remember is Fabulous Moolah chasing me around my television set threatening to kiss me. ☐

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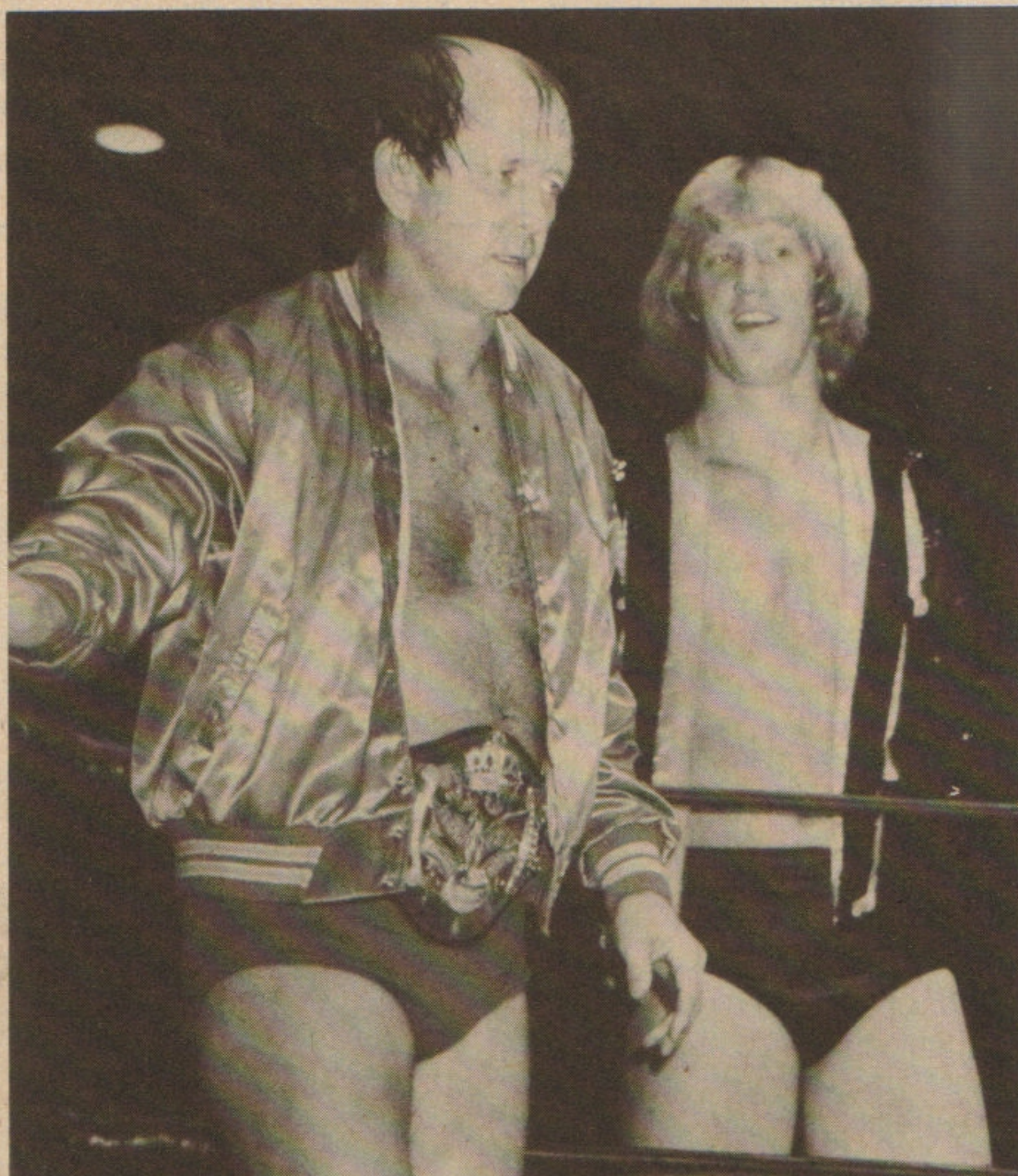
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## Press Conference

(Continued from Page 25)



International champion Funk and his protege, David Von Erich, are a frequent tag team combination in Florida. Funk has had a profound influence on Von Erich's life, as he's had on many young grapplers.

ing your friendship with David Von Erich.

**FUNK:** That's reporter slop. Totally false. I've molded David into the man I wanted him to be. He's my perfect tag team partner. He also wrestles the way I want when he wrestles alone.

**PETERS:** When he's supposedly on his own, do you get a cut of the action?

**FUNK:** No comment.

**PETERS:** There are rumors that you and Dillon have Von Erich split up between you, taking most of the money from the kid in return for your "expertise."

**FUNK:** No comment.

**SAKS:** Do you think you can real-

ly keep Von Erich as your pet to do your bidding?

**FUNK:** David does what I say because he knows I'm right. If Dillon offers advice, he'd be a fool not to listen. David isn't a fool.

**PETERS:** Do you or Dillon get money for this advice?

**FUNK:** I said no comment to that.

**KING:** You've always kept your thoughts pretty close to the vest. In contrast, your brother is reckless both inside and outside the ring.

**FUNK:** Yeah. Between us, we make some interesting contrasts. I've tried to calm Terry down a bit, but I might as well try to tame



a tornado. I don't like to show any emotions. People who know us for a long time say I'm actually more dangerous when it gets tough. I don't know. I do know you stand a better chance getting mercy from Terry than you do from me. Someone once asked me if I could remember being merciful to an opponent. I figured there might have been some time early in my career, when I was naive. I couldn't think of any instance, though. Terry said it's because even in my younger days I was always righteous. Righteous people are never merciful.

SAKS: We'd like to ask you about "Hacksaw" Butch Reed.

FUNK: One tough battler. He took my International belt, and it was one hell of a match. I'll get it back. He's tough, but I'm smarter. When you get to this point in wrestling, brains beat brawn 10 out of 10 times.

KING: Would you like to add anything?

FUNK: That's all you need to know.

PETERS: We'd also like to ask you about Jack Brisco.

FUNK: When it's all said and done, I want to be remembered as the man who ended Jack Brisco's career. We've wrestled too many times, hurt each other too often, for there to be any chance of us trying for less than total destruction of the other. One of us will totally conquer the other. I'm going to conquer him. He's living on borrowed time.

KING: Is there any chance Dory Funk Jr. will ever return to being a scientific wrestler?

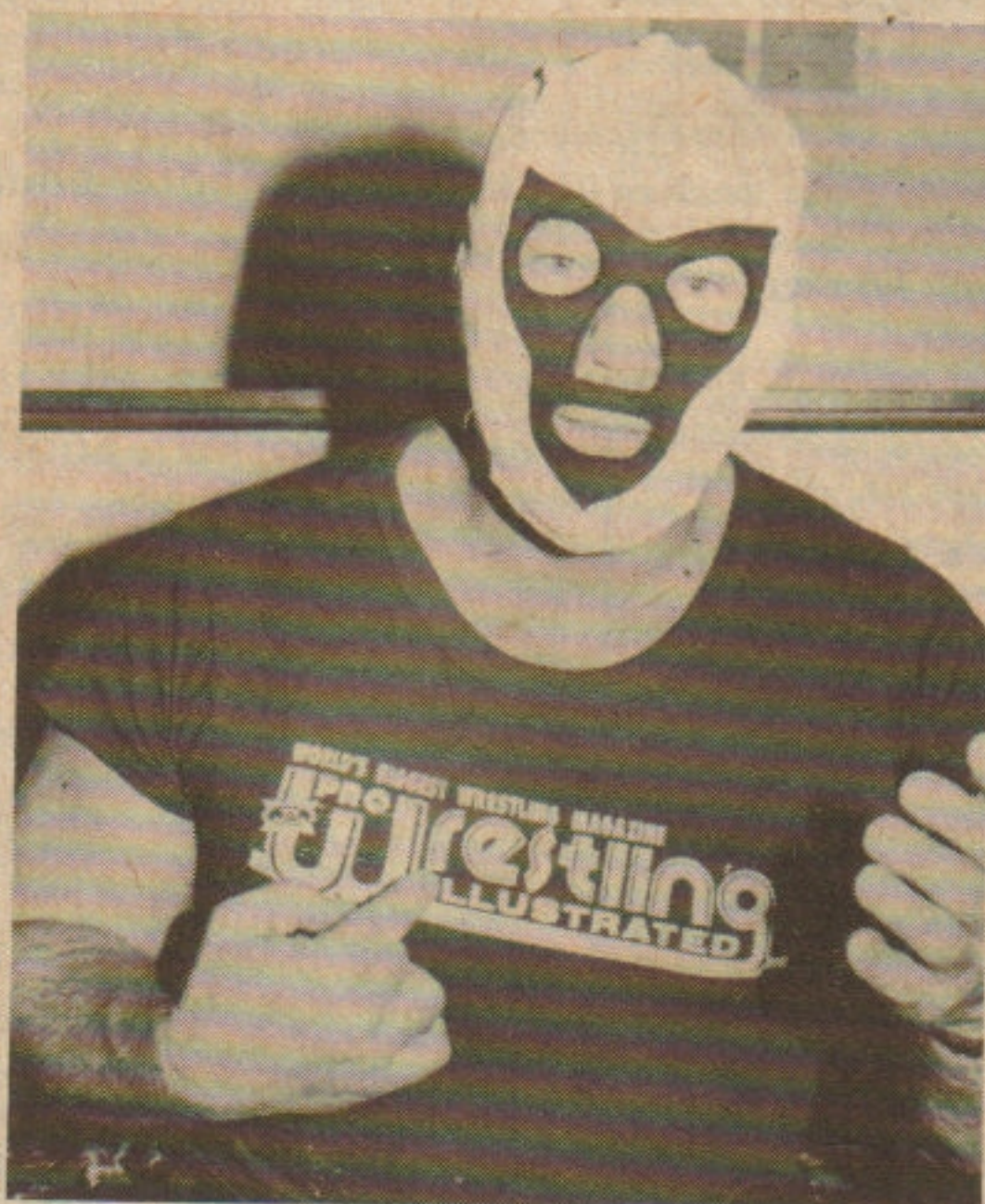
FUNK: I don't know what you're talking about. "Scientific wrestling" is a label fans give to wrestlers they like but who lose all the time. I'm just a man who has developed and matured over a period of time.

SAKS: I guess that covers everything.

FUNK: Good. I hate interviews. □

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## Rhodes-Piper

(Continued from Page 31)

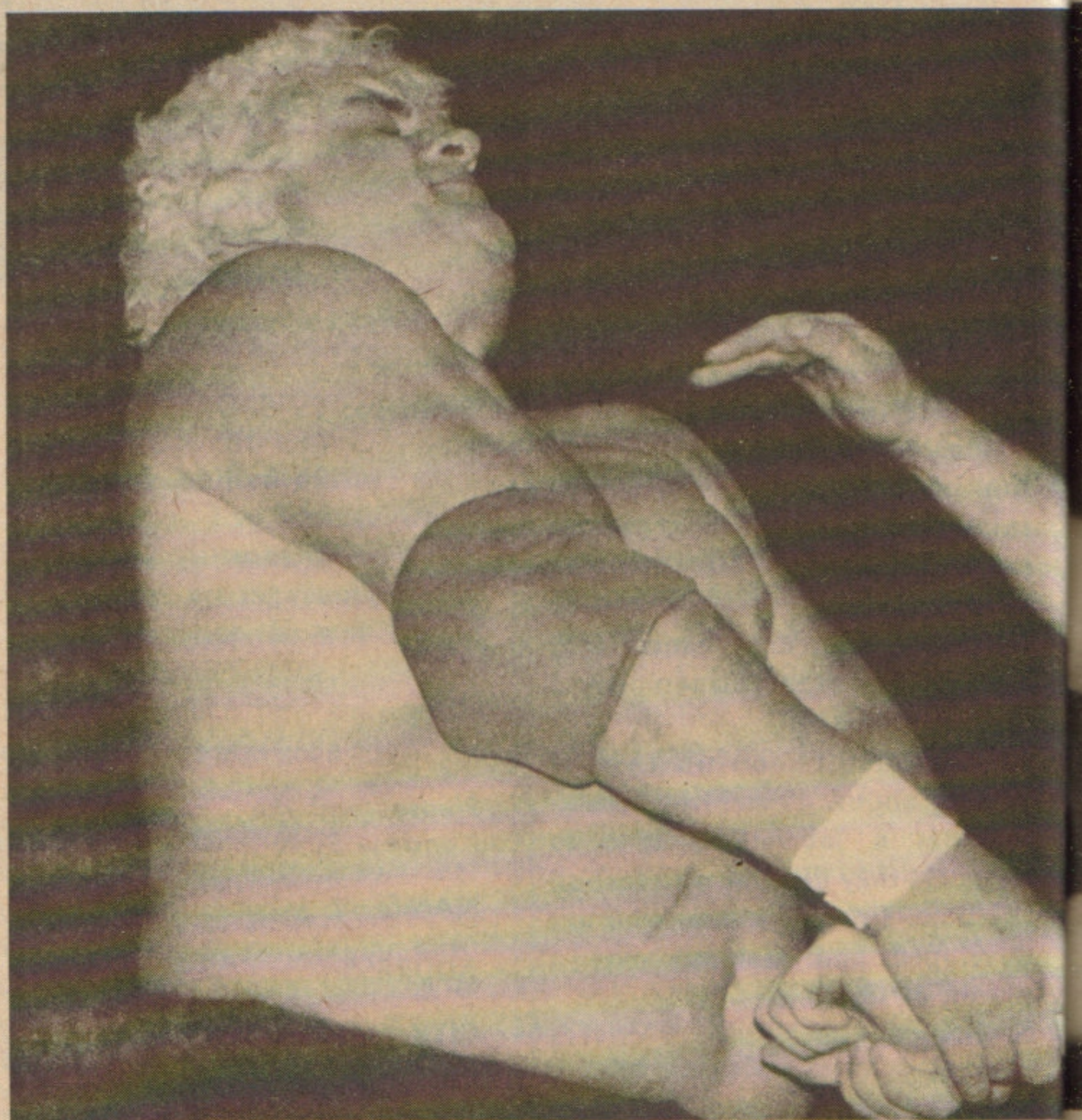
Dusty Rhodes can see I'm succeeding. I have more money than any other wrestler. I have more victories. I have wrestlers to battle for me. I don't have to strain myself, I don't have to waste my energy. I prepare. I examine all the options. I emerge from the ring victorious. That's why I control Georgia wrestling. Everyone says I'm the most important person in Georgia wrestling—more important than the champion, the referee, the commissioners. They're right. I am!

"I welcome a challenge from Dusty Rhodes. It's the only way I can drive him out of wrestling once and for all. In fact, I've already got him another job. I've already sold him to a tugboat captain to use as a barge."

It came as no surprise when

Roddy Piper put a \$5,000 bounty on Rhodes. He also took every opportunity he had to wrestle Dusty. The matches were ugly, brutal, and little or nothing to do with any civilized concept of sport. These were brawls intended to cripple. In a twisted way, it is a credit to both men that they survived these encounters.

At least, they've survived so far. Piper is still the controlling influence on Georgia wrestling. He seems able to call the shots, maneuver the matches, and order about a corps of renegade grapplers. It has been a brilliant and seemingly successful campaign. At his present rate, by this time next year, Roddy Piper should be the czar of Georgia professional wrestling. Any scientific grappler would be smart to



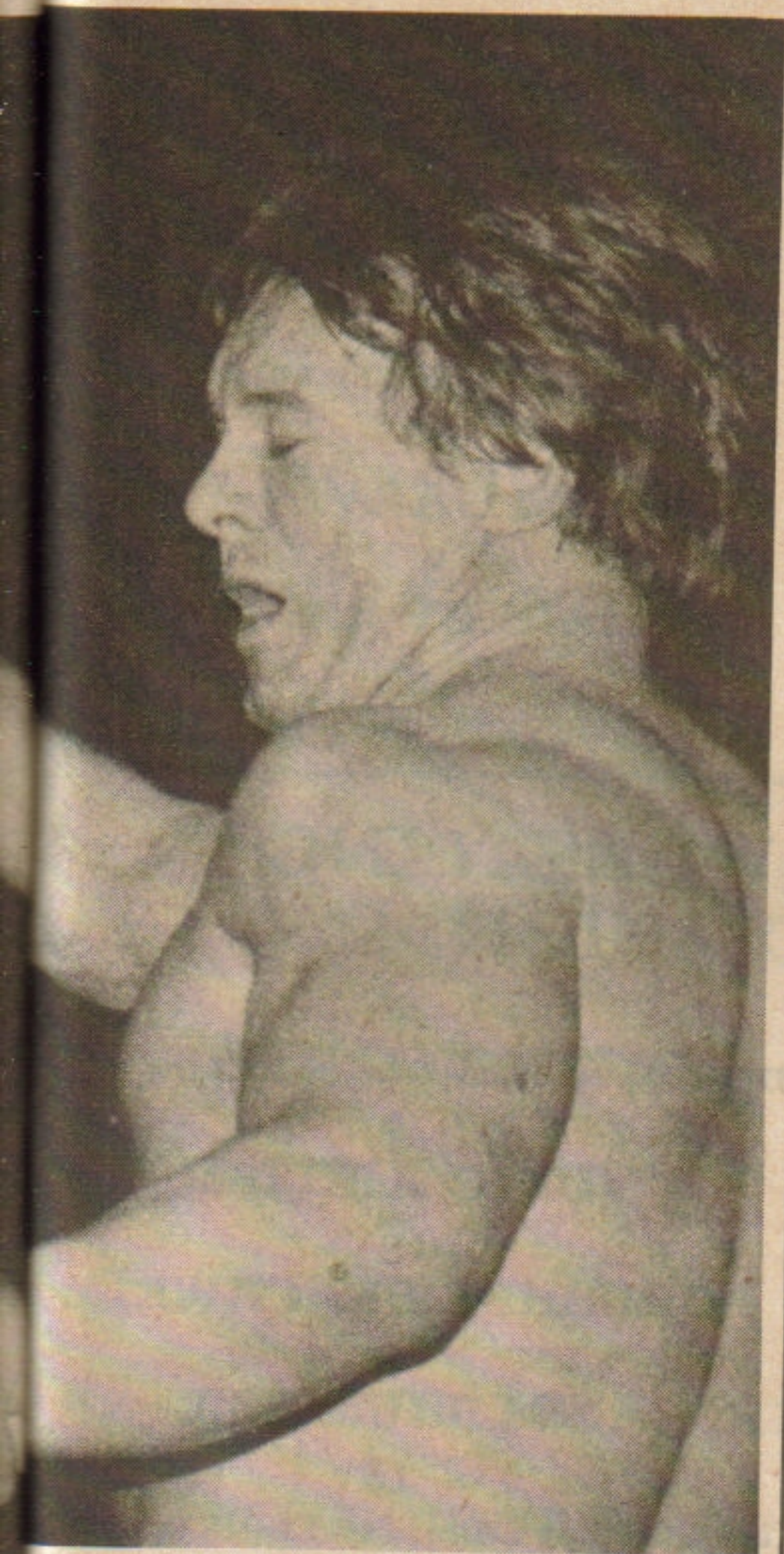


leave the area. One shudders to consider the fate of any scientific wrestler more brave than smart.

The only person who can put a stop to Piper's dreams of empire is Dusty Rhodes. The odds are against him. Piper has done too well to be stopped by anyone less than a hero. If Georgia wrestling will continue to be a beacon of integrity in wrestling, it will be the heroics of Rhodes that will save it.

So once again, Dusty Rhodes rides to the rescue. But this is life, not a Hollywood western. Dusty knows better than anyone that come sundown, the agony of his battered body might be telling him why he failed for keeps. □

*Piper's mouth drops open from the pain of Rhodes' armtwist. Dusty's goal, of course, is to shut Piper's mouth. And he feels the best way to do that is to beat him so badly, he will depart in embarrassment.*



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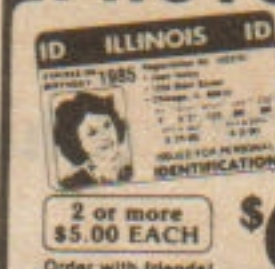
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